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PARK-STREET PULPIT:

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

WILLIAM H. H. MURRAY.

SECOND SERIES.



BOSTON:
JAMES R. OSGOOD & COMPANY,
(LATE TICKNOR & FIELDS, AND FIELDS, OSGOOD, & CO.)

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SABBATH MORNING, OCT. 8, 1871.

SERMON.

TOPIC.—THE ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF CITY CHURCHES.

“BE WATCHFUL, AND STRENGTHEN THE THINGS WHICH REMAIN THAT ARE READY TO DIE; FOR I HAVE NOT FOUND THY WORKS PERFECT BEFORE GOD.” — Rev. iii. 2.

THERE are two sources of power in the Christian Church; the one human, the other divine. The two united, and acting in conjunction one with another, represent the sum total of those influences now at work among men. God co-operates with men to originate and establish what is needed for the better energizing of his merciful intentions toward the race. Like two streams, one of which has its head far up in the mountains, while the other starts from some spring in the valley, which come together, and join their current, so the natural and supernatural are united in the administration of the Church. On the one hand, the Holy Ghost is manifestly present, quickening, directing, and convicting not a few; on the other, purely human agents and agencies are in operation.

Of one of these two classes of power I wish at this time to speak. My theme is the “Organization

and Administration of City Churches ;” and I introduce the subject to-day, not because I feel that I am able to discuss it exhaustively, but because I feel that the matter should be brought up and discussed by some one. It is a subject of the deepest interest to all Christian men ; and the sooner the Church takes it up and studies it, the better it will be for her own honor and those high interests which God has intrusted to her keeping.

The first thing to be ascertained at the outset is, Where does the converting power of the modern Church lie ? Is it to be found in the pulpit, or the pews ? or jointly in both ? For if it should appear that it does not exist to the needed extent where people imagine it does, then would they look elsewhere for it. If in the pulpit, then the organization and administration of our churches should be entirely unlike what they should be if it exists outside of the pulpit. When the proper foundation is found, then the building can go up, — not before.

There can be no doubt that formerly the pulpit did nearly represent the entire converting energies of the Church. It represented the human agency in every revival. Every one so regarded it ; and the organization of the Church, the rules and methods, the official structure, all was shaped in accordance with this idea.

But a change came. The situation and condition of the Church were modified. And I will give you in brief the history of these changes, that you may the better understand the position of to-day. We all

know, that, in the beginning of Christianity, every disciple became an agent to convert others. Every convert was, not merely in name, but in fact and practice, a preacher of the faith. The letters which Paul from time to time addressed to the churches prove this: they abound with directions and exhortations to the workers. His epistles, urging active effort, and individual devotion to the Master, were read to all the churches, and received by the members, personally addressed to each one. James took the same view. The great aim of apostolic effort seemed to be to make workers, — enlist agents in the *service* of Christ. The early preachers of the faith never labored to build up a hierarchy, a caste, a priesthood, in which should be lodged all power, by which should be represented all converting energies: they strove to make every member of the church active; constant, in season and out of season, to win souls. To this both the teachings and example of the apostle alike tended. Personal activity was the basis upon which the early Church was founded. This was the Gibraltar of that faith which felt itself to be invincible, and destined to rule the world. Each church had a bishop, or overseer: and the very name implied a body of laborers under him, — an active, earnest, helpful lay-element; men and women who had work to do, and over whom the bishop or preacher was installed, as a colonel over a regiment, or a captain over a crew. This was the idea. For centuries it was universally held and complied with. The pastors directed, and the churches worked. Then came

pride and priestly assumption, and ambition to rule. These invaded the churches; took possession of the minds of the clergy; and in order that a priesthood might be built up in whom should be lodged all power, and who should represent all activity, the lay-element was suppressed. At last, the Church surrendered: song and prayer and exhortation and labor ceased in her membership; and the priestly caste held undisputed possession of the organization, and wielded it for their own purposes.

Then came the dark ages, — a dead level of spiritual lapse and stagnation, without even a ripple of activity to denote the existence of life or impulse. From the Stygian wave of that all-ingulfing sea, in which all art, all knowledge, all virtue, sank, and was lost to man, Rome emerged stronger, more cruel, more tyrannous, than ever. Beneath and around the feet of her pontiff, every spiritual function of the Church, every activity, lay chained, slaves to her will.

No hymn, no prayer, no exhortation, was heard, save such as were chanted by the order of her priests. Then Luther, raised and inspired of God, arose. The Reformation came; and partial liberty was the result. I say, partial liberty, — freedom from Rome, but not freedom to work; freedom for the ministry, but not freedom for the laymen. They were still held in a thralldom beside which the tyranny of man is as nothing, — the thralldom of custom, the slavery of precedent. As it is with woman now, the lay-element of the Christian Church had been educated into silence. Centuries of custom intimidated them; the

gag of a false timidity choked them. A priest had rebelled against Rome, and given liberty to the pulpits ; but no layman was found to rebel against the pulpit, and give liberty to the pews. The Reformation was thus radically incomplete. Only one part of the Church was emancipated, and restored to the primitive liberty. The Reformation in Germany left the Church a great way below the position in which Paul left it.

At last came Wesley, — a greater than Luther, as I have often thought. It was not, it is true, the pope he opposed : but he did oppose and make war upon the same spirit of assumption of power in the ministry ; the same exclusiveness that made the Papacy a curse to man, and a hinderance to the Church. When Methodism arose, the Pauline churches were reproduced in history. Every man's mouth was opened ; the membership found their voice ; and praise and prayer and exhortation sounded once more in the assembly of the saints. The Pauline liberty was practised ; and the Phœbes and Dorcas were permitted to have an ecclesiastical existence and mention.

My friends, I feel like pausing here to make your acknowledgments and mine to John Wesley, and those co-laborers of his, whose piety and sanctified resolution gave to the membership of the churches what the Reformation by Luther gave to the ministry, — liberty to speak and work as the Spirit of God moved them. This is the age of lay-effort, the day of spiritual liberty : and, as we stand bathed in the light of it, let us recall the early dawn ; let us remember the obloquy those

men endured by whose prayers and labors the liberty and light came. Let no one call them Methodists. Methodism cannot claim them. The Lutheran Church might as well endeavor to monopolize Luther. They were God's gifts to the race. They belong to the Church universal; they belong to mankind. Place their busts in what niche you please; carve on the tablet what record you may: I bring my leaf of laurel, my sprig of bay; and the suffrage of the world says, "These men belong not to any denomination; they belong to the whole Church of God: his laurel and his bay, Congregationalist though he be, must be woven in their wreath."

You can trace the great success of Methodism to the fact that it has duplicated the Pauline energy in the organization of their churches. It has had but one motto,—the utilization of all spiritual forces. If a man could pray or sing or exhort, he was allowed to do it. If a saint chanced to be of the female gender, it did not consign her to the limbo of nonentities, and gag her mouth with a perverted and misapplied text of Scripture: it gave her full permission to serve the Master as he by nature and grace had qualified her. It has found a place for every man, and a man for every place. That is the whole philosophy of the success of Methodism. It has been courageous. It has not been afraid of change, of innovation. It has not been afraid of "new methods." It has not been ashamed of its poverty, nor of the ignorance of its itinerant preachers, which has been so much emphasized by ministerial

purists. A great many Congregational churches are in danger of dying because of their learned pulpits. They are carrying too much theology, and too little active piety, to live. They are in the condition of the patient who was told by his physician, that, in order to live, he must have his head cut off. The reason why I so often refer with gratitude to the Methodist Church is, because it has done so much to bring out and set to work the *lay-element*. It has reproduced the apostolic economy of moral forces. It has reaffirmed the right of woman to a religious character, and to all those exercises of mind and soul which make such a character possible; and made the prediction safe, that she who gave unto Christ whatever of human nature he had, bringing him forth as a son without a father, will be the foremost to advance his blessed cause, and the first to welcome him at his second coming in power. This is why I honor it. May that Lord who raised it up, and entered it as a wedge under the iron-like band of prejudice and ecclesiastical tyranny, preserve it from that pride and timidity which would blunt its edge and destroy its coherence, and drive it well home, to the cleaving of whatever puts a pressure upon the functions of the Church, and the liberty of the soul in its longings for God and its labors for man!

I do not wish to be understood as saying that the lay-element, as a converting force, is as yet fully developed even in the Methodist Church; and, if not in it, far less is it in the churches of our denomination. We have approached so far toward liberty as

to doubt the divinity of our slavery. That, at least, is sure. The time was, in this country, when none but the minister could conduct prayer-meetings, and none save the deacons were good enough to pray and exhort in them ; nor even they, unless specially sanctified by the invitation of the pastor. The time was, when the sex would have been scandalized if a Christian mother should have dared to lead in prayer at the family-altar, or invoke the divine blessing at the table. We have got some ways beyond that. If any one desires to know where the movement, begun in Wesley, and which has lifted and propelled the Church as the incoming wave lifts and heaves a ship forward, will stop, he can easily ascertain. Its logical conclusion, and to which the next generation will come, is this, — that every converted person, white or black, male or female, has the inalienable right to serve God and man in whatever way the Author of being, and the God of all grace, has made possible. Voice and hand and heart shall speak and labor and beat as the Spirit shall quicken them, unhindered by any. That is what we are coming to ; that is the shore toward which the current sets. On it, when reached, the Church will stand in that wide liberty to love and work which she enjoyed in her early prime. Swift be the coming of that blessed day !

Now, the introduction of this element of force, the lay-element, into the Church, has brought, and is bringing, great changes to it. Its entire administration is affected by it. It not only directs the general activities of the Church, not only modifies the opin-

ions of the membership ; but it has vastly modified both the manner and the matter of the instruction given it. Take this matter of preaching as an illustration. Imagine an audience without a single sabbath-school teacher in it ; without a single young man who ever assisted at a prayer-meeting, or ever expected to assist ; without a female prayer-meeting, or a benevolent sewing-society ; where a missionary box or society was an unheard-of thing ; where a newspaper was a wonder, and a luxury enjoyed only by a dozen families, — picture, I say, such a congregation, and conceive how different it would be for me to minister to it from what it is to minister to you. There I should be a teacher before his pupils : here I am a teacher among teachers. Such a congregation I should teach for their own good : you I teach for the good of others. They would be only recipients : you are recipients only that you may become better agents. You see the difference. You see why preaching has changed in our churches. A city church is a spiritual normal school, — a place where religious teachers are taught, where men and women are prepared and furnished with the matter and method of instruction to others.

Observe, also, that this state of things is becoming more and more prevalent year by year. As the lay-element is more and more developed ; as mission-schools and Bethels and charity-boards and Bible-readers multiply in our cities ; as the spirit of individual effort becomes universal, and the organization of the spiritual forces of the Church, as represented by

the membership, more and more complete, — the more will the preacher's functions be affected, until, at last, under every pastor will be an organization of workers, banded together for work, each member feeling a personal responsibility for the world's conversion, manifold activities finding manifold channels of expression; and he will be, as his predecessors in apostolic times, truly and in fact a bishop, or overseer.

What burdens the pulpit to-day is not the amount of pages that the preacher has to write, but the character of the composition. Formerly the preaching was largely expository and doctrinal, and the preacher walked from year to year around the same circle of theological discussion; but now, owing to the development of the lay-element in the Church, a thousand and one topics of vital interest to, and vitally affecting, the Church, must needs be examined and discussed. How to restrain, and yet not to offend; how to stimulate and cheer on without encouraging rashness; how to adjust the new to the old, so as to prevent destruction to the one, and friction to the other; how to keep at the head of the radicals without forfeiting the confidence of the conservatives, — these and many other problems are tasking the pulpits of the land to their utmost capacity. I do not hesitate to say, that in order to conduct the administration of any prominent city church successfully, so as to meet either public expectation or the demands of the cause, one needs to possess rare powers of tact, judgment, and general ability. He must, in addition

to the qualities that make a preacher, possess those higher qualities that denote a statesman, — the ability to both anticipate and provide for future contingencies.

The trouble is, that, at the present time, the Church has not really accepted the position which it is plain she must sooner or later take. We are in a transition state, not from one form of doctrinal belief to another, but from one form of administration to another. The work to be done is beyond the capacity of the Church, under her present methods of service. To illustrate: The ministry is in the position of a manufacturer, who began with one shop, and a business to which he could be the sole and adequate overseer; but now his business has so expanded, branch after branch has been added, shop after shop builded, that he cannot adequately oversee it alone, and yet can find no one to whom to intrust the management of the several departments. He does the best he can, — works day and night, feeling all the while that no such returns are coming in as the business warrants. The establishment, in point of fact, has no thorough supervision: it is running itself, the main reliance being on the industry and knowledge of the workmen. Take this church and congregation, for instance: there is only one officer that really has charge of any thing: I refer to the superintendent of the sabbath school. That is in good hands, and gives the pastor no uneasiness. But, outside of this, the church is not connected officially with any branch of spiritual industry. We have no board for local charities, none for visitation of the

sick and the transient, none for mission-enterprises, none for direction and leadership of the young, none for literary and social entertainment: all these branches of effort, so far as developed, are really running themselves. There is to them no responsible head with whom the pastor can consult, from whom he can receive reports necessary to his own enlightenment and direction. Officially we are in the same position as when no lay-element, no lay-activity, existed in the church. Officially we ignore the fact, that the last seventy years have brought any change either to our duty or our opportunities.

For one, I am convinced, after a careful examination of the entire question, that every city church of any considerable size and prominence should enlarge its present board of officers to the number of twelve, and put each at the head of some one particular branch of spiritual activity. Each should have, and be held responsible for, his department, as the superintendent of the sabbath school is now for it. Each should be elected because of his peculiar fitness for the position the church elects him to fill; and the twelve should constitute the official board of the church, submitting monthly or quarterly their reports to the pastor and the church. The wisdom of such an organization would, I am persuaded, be speedily manifest in the increased results for Christ, and the reputation and usefulness of the church. I submit this suggestion to your prayerful consideration.

It appears to me also, that, in our larger and more intelligent churches, some other agency than the pul-

pit must be employed in order to meet the necessity of more accurate and complete knowledge of the Bible, and of the best methods of evangelistic labor. I do not hesitate to say that the pulpit of this city, as it seems to me, is doing all that it possibly can to meet the demand now existing; and yet the demand is not met. There is a felt need in this church for a course of lectures upon the doctrines, a course upon the relation of the Bible to science, a course upon the best methods of reaching and converting the masses, and a full discussion upon "especial means of grace," or how to conduct an anxious soul to Christ. These by no means exhaust the list: they serve rather to hint at the vast field of investigation and instruction which the pulpit cannot at present, under the now-existing order of Sunday services, occupy. The Church long since, and rightly, adopted the motto of "An educated and trained ministry;" but the very same reasons which make a trained ministry a necessity, now compel us to educate and train the lay-element. The education needed is of such a character, that the ordinary pulpit ministrations cannot give it. You might as well say that a young man can be fitted for the ministry by sermons from the pulpit, as that sabbath-school teachers, and other lay-workers of a church, can be prepared, without other instruction, for their labors. Either the services of the sabbath must be modified so as to permit the pastors to preach less, and teach more; or else an assistant must be employed, to whom the department of rudimental instruction in doctrinal knowledge and the ways and means of

evangelization shall be given. One thing we must not ignore: God has raised up a vast resource of converting power in the Church. The membership is full of untrained, undeveloped, unorganized force. The ministry no longer represents the agents for Christ: a vast amount of unused material lies around on all sides. The old methods of church government and administration do not utilize these; and God will hold us responsible, if, by our lethargy or prejudice, these talents lie longer buried. Already the charge is made, that the Church does not give employment to its members; that it is unwieldy and water-logged; that it has fallen into the hands of men who are, neither in sympathy nor knowledge, up with the age; and that other organizations must be relied on to do the Master's work. For one, I mean to wash my hands of all responsibility in the matter: I mean to do all I may to put the Church in such a position, that any other organization shall be seen to be superfluous; in such a position, that every gift of nature and grace in the membership shall be utilized, and so that there shall be an appointed and honored place in which every member may serve the Lord.

Of one thing I am persuaded, — that no efficient organization will ever be made in our churches until the departmental rule is adopted. Great enterprises cannot be carried on for God, any more than for man, with every thing at loose ends. In religion, as represented by the experience and duty of the churches, we find every thing, — from the sublime in speculation and faith to the homeliest matter-of-fact detail-work.

Like the angels in story, we feed the hungry with our eyes fastened on the stars. System is not less valuable in spiritual than in financial matters. As things are now, there is no assortment or direction, or economy of force, by the churches. The pastor and sabbath-school superintendent are the only members who really know what is expected of them. Whoever works at all, works at will, — when, where, and how he pleases. There is no discrimination touching spiritual gifts: you find a man teaching a sabbath-school class of seven who should be preaching to seven hundred, and another preaching to seven hundred who should be in a sabbath-school class. The Church exerts no wise, controlling direction over her membership in matters which should be objects of constant and prayerful attention. Even her deacons are not appointed to any work. The deaconate is nothing in our time but an office without a duty: it is looked upon as an honor, and men are elected to it as to a rank, not a service; and hence it is given to them as a reward, or a sort of acknowledgment by the Church that they are good, inoffensive men, whose record is unimpeachable, and whose faces at the communion will suggest nothing unpleasant to the participants. The fact is, the Church is as ill-conditioned for her work as an ancient runner would have been who entered the race, where the whole world was to run for the prize, with his vestment ungirded, and sandals unlaced. Her very efforts to run only impede her the more. She is caught and tangled and tripped by her exertions. Her very zeal and eagerness hinder her.

But divide the field of duty as felt by the Church into sections, introduce the system of departments into her organization, elect a capable man to the head and chief direction of each department, canvass the membership for the proper class of talents to work in each, and order at once springs out of confusion, zeal out of lethargy, and the Church becomes efficient, and an honor to the piety of the land.

There is one other point I would suggest as worthy your attention: I refer to the relation of the churches to such as profess to love the Lord Jesus.

There is a feeling extant, that no one is to be admitted to the Church unless he is morally certain that he will "sustain himself," or "run well" as the phrase is. If a weak, wavering, ill-instructed convert applies for admission, the point is often raised, that he will not "hold out;" and he is voted up or voted down as the chances for or against this supposition balance the scale. My friends, I do not like this way of treating such cases. That the "weak in the faith" were to be received, it is evident Paul never doubted; for he gave directions how they were to be received. I love to think of the Church as a refuge for the pursued; a shelter to which they can run when chased by passion and appetite; yea, a shelter of guardian hands and loving hearts. The Church is a fold, where the weak and sick lambs find warmth and protection; where those who have wandered on the mountains of their sins, and bear the marks of the wolf on their throats, come panting, and stained with blood, and have their wounds dressed and healed.

So far as I represent this Church, it is and must be a life-boat to the drowning, a shield for the timid and the weak, a well of water for the thirsty, bread for the hungry, charity for the fallen, and helpful love for those ready to perish. I have no idea I shall ever be disgraced because I help the undeserving, — am occasionally deceived, — am kind to some who turn and smite me, — am ready to incur whatever risk there lies in doing one's duty. What cannot hurt his followers, God will see shall not hurt his Church. Why, the voice of one who saw Christ only in the dimness of vision; who realized him not as we, — through history and the quickening of the Spirit, — but through the perspective of faith alone, — the voice of Isaiah rebukes the faltering of modern caution: "Ho' every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." The conditions of membership to this Church are the scriptural conditions, — "repentance and faith." The sacrament-table is not ours; it is the Lord's: he spreads it, and not we; he invites you to it, and not we; he imposes the terms, and not we. You who have repented of your sins, you who trust in the Lord Jesus as your Redeemer, — you are his children, his followers, his invited guests. Weak or strong, stable or fickle, warm or cold, a child of many years or only of a day, — the table and the feast are for you; and no human authority can rightfully keep you from it.

Somewhere ahead of us is a day of moral victory and universal peace. The past reverberates with cannon; but the future is resonant with the chime of

many bells, and they play in perfect tune ceaselessly. By and by we shall come and stand beneath the dome in which they hang ; and as we hear them played on by invisible hands, their notes beating through the air like pulses, and as our bosoms heave to their swelling and throbbing, and all our faculties are lifted to ecstasy, then I hope, I expect, to see written around the majestic dome in which the bells of peace are swinging, in lines of living light, these words : “ The Church of the Living God.”

SABBATH MORNING, OCT. 15, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT. — CHARITY OF JUDGMENT.

“JUDGE NOT, THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED.” — Matt. vii. 1.

IN one sense, the result of Christianity is to cause men to pronounce judgments. Whatever educates a person into a higher knowledge of and sensitiveness to right and wrong, whatever opens his eyes to the evil in the world and the hatefulness of it, whatever makes the unlovely and coarse and vicious in character to be recognized as such, must quicken the judicial element in men, and cause them to feel and speak the proper condemnation. All this, and much more in the same direction, Christianity does. When the Spirit, whose office-work is to enlighten the mind and quicken the conscience, enters the soul, and works therein mightily, sin and sinfulness appear in their real character. Vice, washed of its rouge, and stripped of its veil, stands forth in all its deformity, the coarseness of its expression, the ugly viciousness of its features, clearly seen. And so far as men become holy are they made critical. Repugnance at what is unseemly is felt, indignation

experienced ; and their natures rise up in the presence of evil with the port and gesture of an insulted and enraged king confronting his foes.

This is not the "judging" that the Saviour, in the words of the text, warns his followers against. Moral discrimination is inseparably connected with moral purity, and its exercise legitimate ; and Christ never desired, much less commanded, that it be otherwise.

I will call your attention to two considerations that will throw light on this passage. I will try to put you at Christ's standpoint, that you may see things just as he saw them, and understand the motive that prompted him to say, "Judge not, lest ye be judged."

In the first place, then, Christ knew man. He was familiar with human nature. He knew the prevailing tendencies of the human heart, and all the strong tides of feeling and impulse that set in and out of it. He knew all the prejudice and passion and bitterness and bigotry, the hotness of temper, and the lurking censoriousness, in man. He knew, that, from the time Cain smote Abel, violence and cruelty had not lacked exponents. Smiting and smiters were everywhere. The opposite of love, of tenderness, of charity, of forbearance, of patience, was all around him. Human nature was cruel, unjust, devilish. He saw all this, I say ; and seeing it, understanding how wicked and unlike himself it was, he rebuked it. It is the natural censoriousness of human nature, then, the harsh, uncharitable element in man, that this command forbids and condemns.

Again: Christ, at the time he gave this charge to his disciples, was surrounded by foes. He was himself experiencing the injustice he forbade. The Pharisees, the scribes, the Sadducees, and all who were proud and unamiable, were swarming around him like hornets, and stinging him with their poisoned insults and suspicions and cunning interrogations. Without reason, without grounds, without evidence, nay, against all these, unjustly, and without charity, they were condemning him. It was in the very teeth of, such a whirlwind of misrepresentation and abuse that he lifted up this injunction like a strong column of granite. The circumstances with which he was surrounded emphasized the injunction. Out of his own direful experience came forth this exhortation to charity. It was as if he had said, "Behold, all you who are my disciples, how men abuse me! Observe their censoriousness, their harshness, their injustice. With no knowledge of my motives, my mission, or my nature, see how they sit in judgment upon me! They make of their pride and vanity, their egotism and suspiciousness, a supreme court, and condemn me. Do not any of you, my followers, ever dare to do toward each other or any human being what these do toward me, or you shall be sharers in their sin. Judge not, lest ye be judged."

My friends, there are not a few to-day, in and out of Christ's Church, who are very like those whose judgment of people was harsh and cruel when the Lord uttered the words of the text. Human nature is as unamiable now as when he lived on the earth.

Every third man you meet has a stone in his hand to throw at some one. Many of these are professed Christians. They are perhaps honest; that is, not consciously malicious. I should not for one dare to question their piety; but they are bigoted, intolerant, and wofully lacking in tenderness, — that divinest characteristic of Jesus. They exemplify the severe virtues of Christianity, to the almost total exclusion of the milder graces. Had they lived in the age of Jonah, they would have been excellent heralds to have sent down to Nineveh. They would not have flinched from hurling the needed malediction against its grossness and wickedness. They would have set the edge of their censure against the swarming and cursing mob as a scythe is set against a field of bulrushes. But woe to the thief on the cross, to the recreant Peter, to the poor woman whom the Pharisees were so eager to stone, if brought into their presence for judgment! They are men and women who seem absolutely incapable of exercising mercy. Their bosoms are strangers to such divine sentiment. They cannot overlook a failing, forgive a fault, or understand that virtue may exist with weakness. A branch is an emblem of peace; but, strip it of its twigs and leaves, and you have a rod, — the emblem of chastisement. So take from Christianity its mild graces, its forgiving tempers, and its charitable tendencies, and you entirely change its character, making it seem what it is not. Now, purity is not judicial; it is not warlike: its symbol — a dove — is the most harmless bird that flies. A person may be intensely

earnest in his Christian life and convictions, and yet not be intolerant. Intolerance is no sign of piety, though it may be of earnestness. And, as I conceive, those Christians who make themselves sharp-worded censors of other people's foibles, who seize every opportunity to inveigh against the habits and customs of brethren which happen to run counter to their views, who have no mercy and no hope for the fallen and the falling, do not act as Christ would have them do.

And now, in further enforcement of the subject, I urge three considerations. First, that our ignorance of the nature and circumstances of those who err compels us to charity of judgment.

If a man knew the strength of the temptation, and the condition, physical and mental, of the tempted, he might estimate correctly the real guilt of the criminal. To every error and misdeed there is a cause. This cause may lie in the depravity of the heart, or in the character of one's surroundings, or in both. Some ships are wrecked through inherent weakness of timber, some by bad pilotage, and some by the irresistible power of tempest. There are sins of premeditation, — gross, wilful, deliberate. Direct and heavy be the stroke of our condemnation on these! But there are also lapses from virtue, indiscretions, errors, and falls, not wilful, not deliberate. The blood in us is feverish; and gusts of temper, and hot impulses, sweep and surge unbidden through us. We are the embodiment of contradictions. We were born, it may be, from the commingling of contrary or hostile ele-

ments. The union of diverse bloods begot commotion. The mother in us can barely tolerate the father. Hence internal strife, fierce grappling, and warfare; hence, too, contradictions in conduct, and widely different phases of life, in the same man. I merely mention these things: I make no attempt to analyze or to harmonize them. As existing facts, I remark upon them. That they lead the thinker into a land shadowy and indistinct proves nothing to their disfavor. As you draw near to first causes, everywhere you enter into mystery. The mists and vapors which swathed the new-born world served to curtain the creative energies and instruments from inquisitive eyes. Upon my mind, as it sits in judgment upon men, these thoughts have great influence. The knowledge of my ignorance makes me hesitate: it mitigates my condemnation. Men are both unfortunate and guilty. Some think it orthodox to publish the guilt, and disbelieve the misfortune. Well, that is one way. There is some profit in it. I often think half our virtue comes from our condemning vice. The stronger the pendulum swings, the farther it reacts. Nevertheless, friends, all the misfortunes of life cannot well be physical. Cannot the mind be diseased as truly as the body? If the intellect errs at times, acting mathematically, why may it not err when it acts spiritually? Few men could make an astronomical calculation in the midst of battle. Should it be a matter of wonder, then, if, wrapped in a wilder conflict, fighting with powers and principalities, a man should lose for a moment the sight of stars

suspended like lamps above the battlements he hopes to win? I have known men go down as fools are swept away who swim at the mouth of rapids; and others as they knelt, paddle in hand, nervous and alert, were hurled into the foam and mist by the uplifting of currents they strove to control: and he who, from the quiet waters below, sees broken oar and shivered boat come dashing down, may not declare who acted bravely, or who shrank. The guilt, therefore, we leave with God; the uplifted stone we cast away; and unto Him to whom alone the cause of crime is known, ashamed at our eagerness to condemn, we leave the judgment, and, if it must so be, the curse.

Again: I urge this as a further consideration, — underlying every honest man's consciousness is the conviction of our kinship of evil. Unto all guilt and weakness we are connected by a dire taint and scourge. Like slaves of old, we are all born under the yoke. The faces of all, gay or haggard, look out from under burdens. Of evil elements, evilly mingled, were we born; and by evil education have we grown. The fever rages in us all: the treatment alone has made us differ. The universal disease — the epidemic which infests all climates, enters all houses, visits every cradle — is sin. No inoculation, not even of grace, can prevent all sharing this awful consanguinity; for, as of old time, it antedates birth. In sin are we conceived. Born of flesh, with travail and strong crying, flesh we are. The impurity is at the bottom of the fountain; and at every agitation the water rises turbid and offen-

sive. This thought is not pleasant ; yet is it literally true. We are all in the transgression ; we are all under the law. In form and manifestation of sin we are individual ; in the essence and motive-cause we are folded in the arms of an ugly unity. Well, there is profit for us in this thought, if we will but receive it. Had those, for instance, who dragged the adulteress to Christ, thought of this, they would have been less eager. The effect of the reflection, when he brought it to bear upon their minds, was overpowering. The words of Christ revealed to them their true position. The kneeling, terror-stricken wanton at their feet was their sister : they, in guilt, were brethren to her. Their clamor ceased ; their words of fiery censure died on their lips ; the stones with which they were to slay her fell from their hands : and without a syllable of excuse or vindication, beginning with the eldest, they severally departed ; and the fallen woman (guilty and unfortunate both) was left alone with Christ. Good friends, I doubt if any of you will say I am over-mild with wrong ; yet, in view of our Saviour's conduct, may we not ask, What have we to do with stoning ? What down-fallen woman, or viler man, may we spurn ? Are we without sin ourselves ? Has not the absence of temptation, or early training, or (sweeter thought) God's restraining grace, rather than our own virtue, held us from ruin ? It does not become those who walk the edge of chasms to revile the white bones beneath. It is more than likely, that in the lives of most of us have been periods of extreme peril, — hours when all that is pure,

all that is honest, all that is godly, in us, was put to the test; when every wicked agency, every subtle enticement, times and seasons, all conspired, and in unsought, unanticipated conjunction, bore down upon us; when even the noblest capacities in us were temporarily in unhappy alliance with evil, and the very traits of temper and of blood which lift us up threatened to dash us down. Happy beyond expression, if, when so tried, we stood the test, washing our garments, and making them whiter in the very waters which well-nigh swept us away! As one looks back over his life, and recalls such seasons, seeing now, better than at the time, how frightfully near he was to ruin, all censure of the less fortunate leaves him. He sees how, but for the dire struggles of years which had strengthened his will, or some nice sense of purity his mother gave him, or, more likely yet, some strong-handed mercy reached to him from out of the heavens to hold him back, he would have fallen. And even now he shudders to think what might have been. My friends, I scarcely think any here will call this mere sentiment; and some of you will see in it simple history, — the plain record of passages and experiences through which you have passed, or, it may be, even now are passing. And I would produce in your minds what Christ strove to produce in the minds of the would-be avengers, — a realization of your true position, and charity of judgment, — when he exclaimed, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone.”

I do not plead for crime. I have no sympathy with

that maudlin sentimentalism which pardons traitors here, and denies the existence of hell hereafter. Well-nerved and stout be the arm that smiteth wrong, and sharp and swift the censure following knowledge of guilt! But that eagerness to condemn, so noticeable in some; that evil construction put on acts whose motive is unknown; that merciless remembrance, which treasureth up the minutest past delinquency, forgetful of after-worth and probable repentance; that whispering suspiciousness, quick and pronged as a serpent's tongue, its prototype; that bigotry, and assumption of superior sanctity; that hard, unfeminine punctiliousness which spurns the fallen, and denies the possibility of cleansing to the stained; that clutching of stones to pelt one form of sin by hands not stainless of other forms,—this is what I deplore; this is what I arraign as un-Christlike. Amid such I cast the biting permission of this text, at the hearing of which the self-righteous Jew stood abashed and condemned.

There be those, I verily believe, living to-day, “more sinned against than sinning,” who might have been saved, had they been treated with the tender rebuke of Christ, and not the stones of the Pharisee. There be those, who, by the conjunction of untoward circumstances, have, in morals as well as business, met their ruin. Like a tree uprooted by converging whirlwinds, they were the unconscious centre of powers and pressure irresistible by any method of resistance known to them. Society forgets this, and judges with the sternness of a God,—to whom alone the cause of

sin is known, — and not with the lenity of a Christian. I plead for these. I set their faces in long rows here before me. I group them around this pulpit. I am not ashamed to speak, they being my auditors; and I say to you, “Behold their tears, and hear their cries!” Do you say, “They are guilty”? I respond, “Heaven has pity for such.” You say, “They are unclean.” I answer, “So was the leper.” You say, “They rob and steal, the miserable thieves!” I make no verbal response. I visit upon you only the rebuke of a gesture. I lift my hand; and, following the line of its direction, you exclaim, “The thief on the cross!” I plead for these, I say. I urge you to feel toward them as Christ feels, and do for them what Christ would do were he in your place. To touch the stolid heart; to stir the sense of shame, not in order to assist the punishment, but the reformation; to better the wrong-doer, and not execute the penalty, — should be the object and the effect of Christian intercourse with the erring. That harshness, that severity, which is not so directed and inspired, while it may be in the eye of the law just and deserved, is not Christian.

Unto the thought that our ignorance makes us unfit to judge, and to that other, the remembrance of common weakness, I add a third, — that harshness is not the method of reform.

I know of nothing worthier the living for than this, — to bring your own into harmony with the divine will and the betterment of others. To secure the crown which piety teaches us the pure shall wear, and then gem it, is, in the eye of faith, the object of

life. In the great work of saving men, the plan of the atonement, as published, has made us co-agents. In conjunction with spiritual forces, seen and unseen, we serve. Unto the fountain by whose divine agitations the world is to be healed we are to bring the sick, the halt, and the blind. Not the pure, if such there be, not the strong, nor yet, again, the righteous, are we, in imitation of our Master, to call; but the stained, the weak, the unjust, are to be summoned, and urged to drink and live. Unto all in this congregation is Christ, in the rich fulness of his mercy, precious; unto all, in promise and entreaty, is he to-day near. But if there is one among you whose life, morally considered, has been a greater failure than others; whose sins are darker, and more numerous; whose habits are stronger, and for evil; against whom, had you been caught in the commission of your many crimes and indiscretions, your very friends would rise up to stone and brand you,—unto you, O woman indiscreet! unto you, O man gross and vile! is that Saviour, whom I proclaim, more precious and nigh. The deeper your stains, the freer flows his cleansing blood. *There is hope in your future yet.* In the arms of the atonement, that mighty revelation and mightier mystery, you may yet be lifted, cleansed, and clothed. This is the glory of the atonement, this the vantage-ground it has over all other systems. It is never over-taxed; it never despairs; it is equal to all emergencies; it contends, and contends successfully, with principalities and powers; neither height nor depth appalls it; by

things present or things to come it is unmoved ; it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, — to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

The object of the gospel, and hence the object of gospel effort, is to *save* men. The Christian's prime object is, not to award justice, nor protect society, nor make prominent the distinctions which divide the vicious and the good : his object is rather to better men, to lift the fallen, to cheer the despondent, to cleanse the stained. The white do not need cleansing ; the hopeful need no encouragement ; those whose every inclination impels toward virtue need no restraint. Such as walk with their faces toward the stars need no guidance : give them time, and, without a word or touch from you, they will enter in through the gates into the city. But there be those who absolutely need your guidance, your sympathy, your prayers, — men struggling in the grip of some appetite, striving to break through the meshes of evil habits which years have woven around them ; women fallen from what they might have been, from what they should be, yet in whose natures, like veins in decayed mosaic, are traces of former beauty ; souls which have wandered like the lost pleiad from the bright companionship into which they were born, who need some voice, some harmony, some potent charm, to call them back into their shining sphere. The world is full of such. The wailing and the fierce cursing of the earth come from them. Amid song and laughter, the listening ear catches the sharp cry of anguish and the sound of ceaseless moaning.

There is but one method by which to reach these: it is the gospel method of gentleness, of love. Harshness won't do it. You can't drive men to heaven with whips. Condemnation, however merited, won't do it: censure never brought a wanton to her knees. In this thought lies the secret of Christ's mildness. Redemption, and not retribution, was the generic idea of his mission upon earth; to make men better, his sole object.

Good friends, is it not with the Church as with a ship which for days has been sailing under clouded skies? It is time to heave to, and from the clean heavens take our reckoning anew. It is likely enough that we see things in each other averse to what we regard as the correct thing. It is possible, that, here and there, some of our number have fallen, and their unfortunate lapse is known to us. In all such cases, I recommend the words of the text. It is easy to find fault; it is easy to condemn; there is a certain enticement in severity; it seems noble to be strict: but this readiness to stone people in the presence of Christ is questionable business. Sternness of judgment is forbidden in our text.

In the heart of every one, especially of a Christian, should exist the determination not to die until he has made some one better. It will be pleasant to enter heaven the centre of a group, and that group drawn thither and around you by the attraction of your gentleness. This cannot be done without effort. If you would warm frozen people, you must bring them to the fire: of their own effort they never will

come. If you would bring sinners to Christ, you must go to them, take them by the hand, and lead them up. The farther off and the deeper down they are, the more quick and eager should you be to reach them. Never fear contact with the vicious, if your object be to ennoble them. Some people are so careful to keep themselves clean, that they won't touch any thing dirty, even in order to cleanse it. Heaven is not a place to which God invites respectable people, and genteel people, and people whose morals have been irreproachable, and who never did any thing bad. It is a place where deeply-dyed sinners, pardoned through Christ ; where the soiled and polluted, washed in his precious blood ; where those weary with wrestling with sin, bruised with many a fall, and scarred with many a wound, made more than conquerors by faith in the Lamb, — are invited to come, and do come. And when the day of crowning shall have arrived, and heaven is filled with the sound of harps and the lifting-up of jubilant hands, it will not be the self-righteous Pharisee, who paid tithe on mint and anise ; who held himself aloof from the multitude, thanking the Lord he was not as other men, — it will not be he who gathers his piety about him like a white robe, contrasting with holy complacency his life and example with those of others, who will stand nearest the throne, fullest of praise ; but the poor Peters, rash and hot-tempered ; some thief, like the one on the cross ; some Mary, like she of the evil spirits ; some Paul, who fought the truth with sword and torch ; and they of infinite sin, infinitely pardoned, —

who shall in voice and person most declare the triumphs of the Lamb. Then shall the riddle be solved ; and all will see how the first can be last, and the last first.

O Charity, thou sweet forgiver of men's faults ! come to this sanctuary, and let this audience see thee as subjects see a queen when she returns from journeying, and takes her seat once more before them all upon her throne. Thus seated high above us, receive the greeting of our lifted faces and outstretched hands. O Queen ! thy face is as the face of one born to be loved. Thou hast a look upon thy countenance not of this earth ; a look of tenderness ; a look of love that is divine. I see no stones within thy lily hands ; and thy white fingers have never set the poisoned arrow to the quivering string. But we are rude and harsh, and talk with hasty tongues. Teach us, we pray, the grace of yielding. Hold back our hands from smiting when we are smitten. Incline our hearts to love those who hate us, and make it easy for our lips to bless those who do us ill. Paralyze suspicion in us, and make us happier with a larger trust. Stretch out thy sceptre over us ; open thy lips, and into the silence of our bowed attitude, and cleaving it as a scented breeze cleaves the waiting atmosphere, let the sweet saying come, " Judge not, lest ye be judged."

SABBATH MORNING, OCT. 22, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—GOD'S GIFTS TO MAN, AND MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY AS INFERRED THEREFROM.

“EVERY GOOD GIFT AND EVERY PERFECT GIFT IS FROM ABOVE, AND COMETH DOWN FROM THE FATHER OF LIGHTS, WITH WHOM IS NO VARIABleness, NEITHER SHADOW OF TURNING.”—James i. 17.

THE word “gift” is one of the loveliest in the language. It is a flower-like word, and full of fragrance. Its suggestions and reminiscences are delightful. It is a favorite word both with God and man. It is used I know not how many times in the Bible, especially in the New Testament. It is introduced to symbolize what would otherwise remain hidden in God’s nature and conduct. Pardon, redemption, holiness, heaven, —all are mentioned as the *gifts* of his grace to us. It is a most significant and expansive term. Like the firmament, it is inclusive of all bright things visible to man in the doings of God. You might enumerate every act of the Father, from the creation of man to the gift of the Holy Ghost, and all the operations of his mercy since, and group them all together; you may call the roll of all his deeds of love to man, and all his gracious acts to us individ-

ually: and above them all, or upon the face of each separately, one might, with the accuracy of entire truthfulness, write "Gift." They have all come to the race, and to each of us, fresh from his hand. They were all suggested out of the overbrimming fulness of that love for us which makes its channel deeper and wider in flowing, and limits itself only by our capacity to receive. Whatever there is of strength and beauty in our bodies, whatever of power and dignity in our minds, whatever of capacity in our moral faculties, they have all been directly bestowed upon us by God. There is not a hope I have in which I do not see my Father's face; and the reflection of the face reveals the mirror's use, and makes it lovely. There is not a love known to your life, to which is any depth or purity, from which come not divine reflections. You cannot put your foot upon its liliated marge, waking, nor sail dimly out in dreams upon its surface of perfect rest, you cannot gaze into it from any point of view, and not see, far down and within it, bright and shining suggestions of heaven. Nor is there any sympathy in your heart or mine, friend, or any sweet impulse or prompting, no high aim or noble motive, no, nor any consolation which makes our sorrows like wounds which heal themselves in bleeding, not of God. I bring all these together, and string them like pearls upon one necklace, and lay them in the palm of his benevolence,—a kind of tribute; my little gift to the All-Giving.

Friends and strangers, you whose habitations are with us, and you whose homes are far away, know

ye, one and all, that I am to speak to-day of God as a *giver*. How apt the suggestions of the day and place! This sanctuary in which you are now sitting is his gift to you. This blessed Bible — whence came it? From God. The preacher's voice and presence — whence are they? Who sent him to you? God. This holy day, this gift of rest to your bodies, bringing repose and healthy change of thought to your minds, and such opportunities to your souls as overlap eternity in their possible influence, — who gave this sabbath day to man, and fenced it in with solemn injunctions, and cherished it through all the ages, even down to our own time, and made it to you and yours the sweetest and best of all days? Who has done this? God. Look, then, upon this altar and these walls, and on this book, and on the speaker's face, and on the lighted firmament around and above, beneath which this city — the noise of all its commerce hushed, the voices of its tumult silenced, and the pulses of its activities still — keeps in peace its day of holy rest, and see on altar, and sanctuary walls, and sacred volume, and living face, yea, and written across the vault of heaven itself, the words, "God's *gift* to man;" and, as if he did address you through me, — as in very truth he does, — listen and consider while I speak of his gifts to you, and your responsibility to him.

You may begin with the very lowest of his gifts to you, — those that come through the ordinary channels of nature, and hence seem least connected with supernatural bestowment, — even your bodily powers, — and you can but see at a glance how perfectly you are

equipped for usefulness and happiness upon the earth. In your own body find proof of your Creator's love. What grace, what beauty, what sensitiveness, and subtilty of feeling, has been given to the body ! How responsive it is to the mind ! how willing its subjection ! how free and generous its service ! I know that it shall fail, and be not ; I know that by and by we shall have a better : but for the time being, for the present state of soul-development, how adapted the instrument is to the wishes and wants of the player ! You need not go to the Bible, to priest or creed, friend, to learn that God has given you much for which you should be thankful. Examine the ingenious mechanism of your body ; behold its happy adjustments, its surprising facilities, its capacity of accommodation, its power of endurance, its sweet attractions and beauty ; and reverently acknowledge, and be sobered to-day by the thought of, that love that created you. Living in such a palace, you should indeed be as a king : the majesty of your habitation might make a slave royal. Why, friend, it seems as if one wish, one design, presided over the construction of its every part ; the sole object being to give your soul a companion and servant of which it need not be ashamed, and which should constantly minister to its growth and joy. See with what power, what grace, what energies, He has endowed it, and you will soon grow to look with reverence and surprise upon what, heretofore, has awakened no religious emotion, or, indeed, been wholly disregarded. I know that the beautiful temple is defaced, marred, and in ruins ; I know that it stands

to-day like a castle upon which time and man's hate have spent their force, — weakened in all its structure, and robbed of its ornaments. We have never seen a human body as the Creator designed and originally created it. Ignorance and culture both have made war upon it; the one has degraded, and the other emaciated it; and, what these have left, sin has attacked: and between the three, joined as they have been in evil alliance through all the generations back of us, the body, compared to what it once was, is broken down. The power and beauty of its original state are departed; and we see no more, in any thing like its primal state, the last and noblest work of God. The vase is shattered; but, friends, we can see, even in the beauty of the fragments, what, when it came fresh from the hands of the Maker, it must have been. The bow is broken, and the shaft is no longer set to the tense and tuneful string; but in the toughness of the splinters, and the elasticity of the parts, we behold how vast must have been its unweakened power. Even now, as I have remarked, how it serves us! How it toils for us! How the senses, even in their impaired state, seek to and do minister unto our happiness! How sweet are the uses of the ear! — that organ which takes a dumb vibration in the air, and interprets it into a pleasant sound. How constantly busy is the eye! amusing and delighting us with all manner of images brought from near and far. How the nose, through which the breath of life comes and goes, takes the crisp freshness of the air, and the fragrance of the fields, for

our maintenance and delight ! What could God have done for you in your physical organization more than he has done ? Look through the entire list of the animal kingdom, and see if you can find another body so sensitive, so manifold in its adaptation, so supple and alert in the play of its strength, so suggestive of dignity and intelligence, as is yours. Well might the great poet call it the “paragon of animals.” And even regarded in his physical structure alone, seeing that God, in the similitude of his perfection, is like unto every thing perfect, well might the inspired writer say “that man was created in the *image* and *likeness* of God.”

But it is not until you contemplate man in respect to his mental and moral faculties ; it is not until you look within yourself, and behold the powers of your mind, and the more subtile but incomparably superior attributes of the soul, — that you fairly see what God has done for you. What costly, what magnificent furniture is this with which the almighty Architect has fitted up and adorned the temple of the spirit ! Here is Reason, — that pale but lovely reflection of God, — which draws the line between beast and man : on one side of which is mastery, the powers and pleasures of intelligence and eternal life ; on the other, inbred subjection, absence of thought, and existence that hurries to extinction. This is ours, — our birthright ; given, not bought ; bestowed, not acquired, — the sign and proof of our sonship, and a bond that binds us as with ties of blood to his eternal Fatherhood.

Here, too, is Memory, — life's great thesaurus, where we bestow all our jewels; that gallery in which are hung the faces of the loved as no limner could depict them; that chamber swathed thick with tapestry, on which the days, like flying fingers, have wrought grave and bright forms, and retained the otherwise transient joys. Who would give up his memory? who surrender this shield against forgetfulness?

O Memory! thy voice is sweet, and the low murmurs of thy speech fall on the heart like perfect music. Thy power is marvellous, — stronger than death's, more potent than the grave's. All generations have known thee, and thy empire stretches backward to the beginning of the world. At a word, a motion, of thine, the past, which until then was blank and black, is made luminous with glowing deeds and radiant faces, and all manner of bright things. Thy hand passes over their blackness, and makes the over-vaulting and far-reaching years like a starry sky. Thy voice is never silent. The language of the heart is thine, and songs, and the voice of greeting; and tremulous farewells, sadly sweet, come floating up to us; nor is laughter wanting, or the low murmur of prayer. In thy right hand is wisdom; and in thy left, consolation. Hope springs out of thee as a flower out of its native soil; and faith itself finds support by leaning on thy arm. Memory, that findeth her perfect life in God, and in man, according to the measure of his days, a life not less perfect, — what should we do without her? Amid our failures she recalleth some antedating

triumph, and the bitterness of our cup is made tolerable to our lips. When pierced with human bereavement, she bindeth up our wounds with recollected mercies; and God seems dearer and nigher to us because of her power.

My friends, what man is there of you all who would forget his past? — that past where were his battles and his victories, the dawn and fulfilment of his hopes, the birth of thought, the growth of purpose, and the consummation of his plans. No one. And yet memory is one of God's gifts to you.

Here, too, is Imagination, the divinest faculty of them all, winged like an eagle, tuneful as a lark. Whither can it not fly? There is no distance in space, no lapse of time, it cannot traverse. It takes a million years for that beam of light to reach the earth; but I flashed in fancy past its parent orb, balanced as it is amid the far-off stars, even as I spoke. Imagination, thou art the greatest of travellers, and forever journeying. Like that fabled bird that never touches earth, but sails in ceaseless flight above the clouds, sleeping upon the wing, so thou art ever in motion. Thou alone art free. All other faculties are trammelled; all are limited. Bounds there are that they may not cross; but thou art fetterless. The planets know thy coming, and the fixed stars have hailed thee. Thou hast seen God. Thy foot, washed in the all-cleansing blood, white as a lily, hath stood where the redeemed stand; and thou hast heard their songs, and seen their joy. Of all faculties, of all powers given of God, friends, I count this the great-

est, the most subtile, the most ethereal, and the most divine.

Here, then, are reason, memory, imagination, — a trinity of gifts such as none save a God could give, such as none but the offspring of God could receive. I mention only these three faculties: I need not mention more. These are enough to show what God has given you. Are you not rich in gifts? Are you not blessed? What more could he have done for you than he has done? Has he not given as a father who is a God should give, — generously, munificently? What, now, let me ask, have you done for him? Where are your days of labor? where the long account of service? How and when have you cancelled the bond and obligation you are under? When your Father called, have you answered? when he directed, have you gone? when he commanded, have you obeyed? To what use have you put these faculties? Go over the list: what have you been doing with your reason all these years? Have you employed your rational powers to minister to irrational objects? Have you used reason like a besieging cannon to batter down your faith? Have you turned this gift of God against God himself, and used what is of itself irrefragable proof of your divine connection to show that no such connection exists? Perhaps you are an infidel, a sceptic, an atheist. Whence came your power to be such? Whence came your ability to deny, save from Him whom you deny? Can the child deny the existence of the father from whose existence his own existence was derived? I say unto

such of you as may be doing this thing, "He who sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: he shall speak to you in his wrath, — the wrath of an abused and affronted father, — and vex you in his displeasure."

Or again: to what use do you put your memories? Its lessons are many. Do you allow them to teach you wisdom? Do you not know that the highest of all attainments is to so live that recollection shall not be painful? Half of heaven will consist of remembrance: the endless song will derive half its pathos and power from retrospection. Never, through all eternity, will any of you Christians forget the hour when you were born in the new birth. Never shall any of us forget the hour when we were lifted from the miry clay and the horrible pit. Then did we truly begin to live. All life before that was one form of death. Only from that point shall we ever wish to date existence. The converse of this is true. The torment of hell is bred of these two things, — recollection and the absence of hope. Of these two parents shall be born those twin-causes of suffering, — remorse and despair. These are the worm that will not die, and that awful fire that cannot be quenched. Your suffering will not be an infliction, but a consequence, — just as it is here and now. You will not be blasted as by a shaft of lightning: the fire shall be within yourself, self-kindled, self-fed, making your immortality an immortality of ill. How much is there back of you, friend, you would like to forget? how much of wickedness that you have partially covered, but which, when the diversions and pursuits of the

world are no longer for a refuge, will stand forth exposed as in the day of commission? Then shall that deed arise; then shall that thought stand forth; then shall that crouching lust spring up in its revolting vileness: and they will point their fingers at you, and say, "Thou art the man!" "Thou art the woman!" For the day hasteth on, yea, is even nigh unto us, when we must own all these children of the mind, be they white or black; when they will swarm about us, and say to Him who shall then be sitting in judgment, "This is our father and our mother!"

And, lastly, imagination, — what have you been doing with that? Upon what missions have you sent it? Upon what has this great artist of the mind been busy? What pictures have you commanded it to produce? Have you sent it out as a pioneer to corruption, and made the debauchery of anticipation tenfold greater than the debauchery of act? What are you doing with it day by day? Do you fill its hand with tare-seeds, and send it forth over all the field of your future life, compelling its unwilling palms to sow for a dire harvest? or have you even debauched it, until its former divine repugnance to such service is lost, and it delights itself in wickedness? Are any of you convicted? and do you say, "Tell me, tell me, of some power within or above myself by which I can call in the winds that I have sown, and thereby escape the fearful reaping of the whirlwind"?

My friend, that power exists alone in Christ. In him I found the power; in him hundreds of others

here this morning found it. Of this fact we bear our testimony before you to-day. We bear our testimony, I ask you to note, to a reality which we have tested and experienced. The witness is within us,—in the memory of former weakness converted into power; in the remembrance of failures subsequently changed to triumphs; and, what is dearer and sweeter yet, the consciousness of growing strength which we feel springing up within us day by day. Could evidence be stronger? Could proof be more direct? He alone, we say, can forgive your abuse of reason; he alone can take remorse from recollection, even by washing out the record of the transgression which feeds it; he alone can restore your imagination to its original purity, and make it as familiar with spiritual sights and uses as you have made it with sensual. And so you see that the bestowments of grace are even greater than the bestowments of nature; and that, in this offer to rectify the misadjustment of your faculties, God does more for you than he did even in their endowment. The mercy which forgives and reforms is greater than the goodness that created.

Here, then, you stand, with your house unsteady above your heads, and the western horizon full of approaching storm. Here, then, you stand, morally in ruins, not a faculty doing its originally-appointed work, not a capacity free from abuse, not a column of power in its proper place; and the great Architect comes down to you, and standing by your side, and calling your attention to the condition you are in,

says, "See, my child, what a building I built for you to inhabit!—how marred, how defaced, how untenable, it is! Come, join with me, and let us restore it to its former beauty and fitness. Here are the materials," he says; "here are friends to assist you: I will stay with you to direct." What more could you ask, friend? Realize the fulness of the offer: every power, every faculty, every lost grace, every shattered virtue, shall be restored; and your soul, forgiven of all its faults, cleansed of all its stains, perfected in all its parts, shall return at death unto the God that gave it.

This is the overture: who will accept it? Who is willing to take the responsibility of a refusal? If any, speak, that we may know who, on God's holy day, in God's own house, and when entreated by the Spirit, spurns the offer of his grace. Speak, that we may separate ourselves from you, lest the consequences of an affront from which we shrink, but which you are reckless enough to put upon the All-Powerful, may fall, too, on us, and the innocent suffer with the guilty.

I know what delay the Tempter will suggest; what excuses he will put into your mouths; how he will urge you to procrastinate; how, from this moment, he will strive to divert your minds, and banish from your thoughts the duty and obligation of gratitude. Say that you will not be deceived; say, that, being forewarned, you will be on your guard. I will not multiply words: I hold back the feelings that struggle for utterance. My feelings are nothing here or there: your feelings are the things to be considered: the

condition of your soul, not mine, is the point at issue. My exhortation would not help you: it is action on your part, and not words from me, that will save you. I care not how. Let it be in the thunders of a guilty conscience, in the whirlwind of remorse, or in the still small voice of child-like submission, burying its face in the robes of his offended fatherhood. I care not how. I only pray that God may stand manifested in power and love before you on the summit of this opportunity, here and now.

I beg you to remember that he has already done, both in the way of nature and of grace, all that can be done for you. There is no mercy held in reserve, to meet difficult cases, yet to be revealed. There is no unopened fountain of compassion lying back of Calvary, into whose waters, powerful to cleanse, you can in your dying-hour plunge. When Christ died, all that God could do was done. Heaven retired within itself at that exhibition of its sympathy, and watches in silence the issue of its last endeavor. That endeavor has reference to each individual life. The eyes of the multitude are on you, friend; and the thrones of heaven lean and listen to hear the result. What is it to be? I feel the breath of a great aspiration upon me. If I could only sweep back the firmament; if I could draw aside, even for one moment, the curtains of blue and gold behind which heaven is, where are the angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and that great crowd of witnesses of which Paul speaks, and, in the centre of them all, Christ himself, who suffered and died that

heaven might be yours ; and you might see how intent and anxious they are, watching you amid a silence so deep that they can hear your very hearts beat, — what would you see ? Look within your heart, and answer. If penitence is there, *joy*, joy unutterable ; if hardness and indifference, sadness and dismay : “ Never,” they say, “ shall that man have another such a chance ; never shall he be saved ! ”

Let me ask you this question : Why do you fight so against God ? Why do you turn so rebelliously against your heavenly Father, even in his own house ? Why do you hear with such cool indifference, with such sluggishness of mind, with such obstinacy of will, his courteous and tender overtures ? You treat him as if he were in the wrong, and you right. You give him no election. No government under heaven could forgive rebels while they continued to fight. Precedent to all pardon, there must be submission. Submit, then, all ye who, in act and word and thought, are in arms against the government of God, or the wrath of God, and of all holy beings, shall abide on you.

Observe, I make no imprecation. “ Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord.” I only interpret results from their causes ; I only declare the plain, unmistakable sequence of your position. I only say, that touching moral duty, touching spiritual relation, touching your position before God, you are wrong ; and you must right yourselves while you may, or you will receive in full measure the consequences of your refusal.

I query about the decisions that are now being made in this congregation. I picture to myself the multitude of your thoughts. Which way do they set? What will be the issue of this morning's debate? I know that you have the power to resist. You have power to harden your hearts. You can brace yourself against the persuasions of the Spirit, even as, when a stubborn and fractious child, you were wont to brace yourself against a father's command or a mother's entreaty. But what an act it will be! How it will recoil on you, as all wrong does on wrong-doers! Let me say something to you. It is this: No man ever crushed down a good inclination in his heart, and did not suffer for it. If there be any stirrings in your heart, friend, any quickening of conscience that has long lain dormant, any breaking-down of an indifference that has become habitual to you, any going-forth of your soul towards God, I charge you not to stifle, not to disregard it. I beseech you to behold in this travail of your mind the premonitions of the new birth. Why, friend, the Spirit is striving with you. These are the voices, more direct, more solemn, more potent, than any verbal exhortation, which declare, as though an angel from heaven bore testimony to you, that "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Who of you in all this crowd believes that this is the day of his salvation? Who of you feels that you have come this morning face to face with the supreme opportunity of your life?

My friends, I rejoice with joy unspeakable that

many of you are not ungrateful for the gifts given you of God. You have bowed your heads above the table, and thanked him for your "daily bread;" amid the luxury and comfort of your homes, you have thanked him for your wealth; with clasped hands, and hearts too full for speech, you have thanked him for your loves; by cradle and grave has the multitude of his mercies risen up before you; and more than once have you exclaimed with the Psalmist, "Praise the Lord, O my soul! and forget not all his benefits."

We know not what is ahead. We know not what calamity may smite, or what disaster befall us. Our future is one vast vault of uncertainty. In it, if stars there be, they are veiled. If any sun is set within its sombre dome, its beams are shortened, and it shines not on our faces to-day. Friends may desert, and foes be multiplied; health may fail, and wealth take to itself wings, and fly away; the vase of your brightest hope may be shivered, and fragrance leave its scented rim: but this I know, and of this I exhort all of you to be persuaded, that God will never fail you. His gifts will never cease. In him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Behind and beyond all darkness, and shining through it, I see the orb of his love, armed on all sides with beams, and lifted ceaselessly by the law of its own sublime motion. And when we have come to the radiant border of that hemisphere whither our feet tend, and from that bed — which the languages of this world call the bed of death, but on which, as a child far fairer than the parent, out of the travail of this life is born the ever-

lasting — gaze off with eyes growing dim to all else, but more open to it, we shall see the orb of God's love shining in meridian glory above us, nevermore to be veiled by reason of any blindness in us, nevermore to be obscured by the occurrence of evil circumstances; for we all shall be changed from glory to glory when mortality is laid down, and we are clothed upon once and forever with the immortal.

SABBATH MORNING, OCT. 29, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—THE DANGER AND WICKEDNESS OF SEEMING TO BE BETTER
THAN YOU REALLY ARE.

“MOREOVER, WHEN YE FAST, BE NOT AS THE HYPOCRITES, OF A SAD COUNTEenance; FOR THEY DISFIGURE THEIR FACES, THAT THEY MAY APPEAR UNTO MEN TO FAST. VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, THEY HAVE THEIR REWARD.”
— Matt. vi. 16.

THE age in which it was the lot of Christ to live when on the earth was eminently a formalistic one. In Palestine the Pharisee held sway; and the Pharisee was the highest expression of show and formalism. He belonged to a class whose great object was to seem to be good. He strove by all methods known to cunning and artifice to impress people with a sense of his sanctity. To this his dress, his mannerism of speech and bearing, his zeal and industry, alike tended. His life was essentially a false one; and religion, if loved at all, was loved chiefly because it supplied the means of his personal elevation.

The Pharisee hated Christ, not so much because he claimed to be the Christ, but because one so unlike himself should claim to be the long-expected Messiah. It was the simplicity and reality of the Saviour's piety which provoked and enraged him. He saw at

a glance that Jesus was totally unlike and antagonistic to himself and his class ; and that, if Christianity should prevail, Phariseeism must go down. If the Nazarene was right, then he and his companions were all wrong ; and he knew that the people would soon perceive it. So long as Christ lived, so long as he was moving about among the people, that system of scriptural interpretation, and that type of piety which was the pride and strength of the Pharisaical class, were unsafe. To kill Christ, was, therefore, the only way, at least the quickest and surest way, of saving themselves. They watched him, therefore ; they put spies upon his track ; they dogged him at every turn ; they stretched wires across his path to trip him. At last, and because the perfectness of his teaching and conduct drove them to it, they made up a lie against him, bribed one of his own followers to betray him, and so murdered him,

My object, to-day, is to hold up before you, as something to shun, a piety of mere habit, of form, of feature, of appearance. There is a vast difference between an orthodox Pharisee and an orthodox Christian. An evangelical who is evangelical only in the form of his prayers, in the intellectual cast of his mind, is the greatest impediment that the gospel has to overcome to-day. Such an obstacle is the best for his purpose that Satan can heave up in the path of advancing truth. What we need is, not more appearance of piety, but piety ; not more professors and professing, but more actual exemplification of the truths professed. The Divine Word needs an incarnation in

the person of every man and woman who nominally follows the Lord Jesus. We should prolong, as it were, his presence on earth, and, by our likeness to him, make his stay perpetual. In one sense, Christ has left this earth; that is, his body is no longer with us: but in a larger sense he is still with us, and will continue to be while there is a single soul that thinks as he thinks, and feels toward man and God as he feels. Seeming is weakness; being is strength. All exaggeration of piety has, in the long-run, a disastrous result. When promise exceeds performance; when verbal consecration is great, and actual consecration is small; when great expectations are raised, only to be disappointed, — then may all who sincerely desire the progress of religious principles be alarmed. Whoever serves God only or chiefly in appearance is his worst foe. Christians should be what they seem.

Now, I ask you to observe what a Christian has in appearance. A professor has, in the first place, a knowledge of *sin*. His every act and word says it. He declares that he understands it in its cause and its effect. To him it is no vague and indefinite element, but a deadly and active agent, working evil, and evil only. He has observed its effect on others, and also noted its influence on himself. Others may be deceived: he cannot be. The marks of its teeth are on him, and he never can forget. Others may play and dally with it; he never: others may be amused and deluded by its fair or grotesque appearance; but, through every mask it assumes, he sees and recognizes the glitter of its deadly eyes. There is not a

man here, I suppose, but that regards sin in its coarser forms as detestable, but that, in a general sense, condemns it. But the Christian is a man whose knowledge goes farther than this. He sees not only that it is detestable, but that it is dangerous. To him it is not merely a shadow darkening the sweet light of the world: it is a miasma, a pestilence, carrying contagion and blight to all that is healthy and pure and noble on the earth. Its presence is plague; its touch is leprosy.

Now, a man with such knowledge, such swift and far-reaching discernment, must be affected by it. His thought, his speech, his conduct, are not as are the thought and speech and conduct of other men. His intelligence is too close, too accurate, too overwhelming, to leave him any election. He must oppose, he must abhor, he must fight it. His knowledge begets an antagonism which is irrepressible. Wherever met, in whatever form, he is for its overthrow and annihilation. His life becomes a warfare, his years a crusade. He makes no compromises; he accepts no truce; he consents to no surrender. If he yields, it is only to superior force. If he dies, his dying thought is hostility; his dying exclamation, "Lord, how long, how long?"

In addition to his knowledge of sin, the Christian, in appearance, is inspired by nobler motives than other men.

The world at least is honest. The unconverted make no profession of extraordinary honesty. The unconverted man in business or pleasure acknowl-

edges no higher motive than self. The throne he builds is for himself or his children: his empire is this world; beyond the grave he has no possession: this he confesses. His wreath is a wreath which will fade, his mansion a residence which will one day stand tenantless. His ear is content with the music of this world, and his heart beats to the impulses of this life alone.

Not so with the Christian. He lays claim to a superior virtue. He aspires to a higher throne, and to a mansion beyond the gates of pearl, whose doors will never be closed, whose chambers will never be silent.

He mingles, it is true, with the affairs of the multitude; but he mingles as salt, to savor and purify them. His plans and actions enter into the bulk of human effort; but they enter as leaven does when it is kneaded into the unprepared loaf. He is the buoyant, airy element in the heavy, inert mass of materialism around him. To the Christian, in appearance at least, self is not the centre and circumference of his ambition. His thoughts fly out of and far beyond himself. Along lines of spiritual electrology he sends and receives messages from the skies. Unfledged and caged, his hopes formerly were undeveloped and imprisoned: now grown and uncaged, with wings which gather gold, and grow their plumage as they soar, his hopes traverse the utmost heavens, refusing to breathe the heavy atmosphere near the earth. No one can describe the influence of this abnegation—this living outside of self—upon a soul. To feel

that you have been “bought with a price ;” that you own nothing of your own right, but are holding all in trust for God ; to lay your body with its capacities, your mind with its every faculty, your wealth with its influence, as a living sacrifice upon the altar of your faith, — this must be felt to be known. Sensation is the sole avenue to knowledge in this direction. Now, a Christian is a person who professes to do all this. He is in Christ as a branch in the vine, not merely connected, not merely dependent upon him, but absolutely *of* and *in* him. He is not a separate organism by himself. He has been absorbed as a part in the greater organism of the whole. He has surrendered ; he has “lost” his own life ; he is “hid with Christ in God.” The effulgence of the “Light of the world” is around him ; and, in the glory of the greater, the glory of the lesser fades away.

Furthermore, he professes that a change has come over his motives. With his emancipation from self, an enlargement in his sympathies occurred. His brotherhood with Christ elects him to a brotherhood with the entire race. Adopted into the family of God, he is inspired with the sentiment of humanity. With every tribe and race, with every grade of culture, with men of every color, he is a full man and brother. This thought is the parent of all true missionary enterprise : it mingles as one of the inspiring causes of prayer and effort for the world’s conversion ; it swells in the melody of every hymn. The Christian is one, then, who professedly contributes

into the world's best growth, and unto whose growth the whole world contributes. Like a flower, he gathers sweetness from all sides, and yields it forth in all directions. Himself the centre and recipient of ministries not a few, he ministers, in turn, unto multitudes. Belonging to Christ, he belongs to everybody; and, being in Christ, all things belong to him.

My friends, has any such change as this, in reality, passed over us? Has the turbidness of our natural dispositions been precipitated? and do we reflect the azure of such a sky? Is there a tribe of men on the face of the earth unto whom we do not give the warm recognition of our kinship? Is there a sot that staggers along the street over whose downfall we do not grieve as over the wreck of one related to us? Do our hopes so magnetize the heavens, that we are lifted by the power of their attraction? or are we drawn by the pressure of a grosser law downward? Have we surrendered our ownership in ourselves in fact, or only in appearance? and given Christ a nominal title to our property, while we appropriate all the income? Are our motives really higher than the motives of non-professors? or do we, when you reduce it to the last analysis, think and act, scheme and traffic, spend and amass, on the same level with them? Are we walking in *truth*, or in a fatal delusion and a vain show? The fig-tree is tall and shapely, and it flouts its foliage bravely; but is it barren in the eyes of the Master when he comes expecting fruit?

One more thing I will mention which a professor

has in *appearance* : it is a desire to grow in *grace*, or in the favor of God.

The Christian lays claim to a divine ambition : it is to be like God. The Bible abounds with passages which are as spurs in either flank of this desire. There are in him longings to approach nearer to God in the essential elements of character. He is not content with that development which the world demands : he aspires to that which the heavens require. If he studies his own mind, it is to discern how nearly it has become like the mind of Christ. If he contemplates his body, he beholds it as the temple of the Holy Ghost. If his affections are the subject of his meditation, he remembers that wife and child, lover and friend, are to be held less worthy than Jesus. His whole nature is planted in Christ, as the banyan-tree is planted in the earth ; and, like its branches, all the growth and outgoings of his soul return, and form their union with the soil in which the parent root is embedded, and by which all are nourished.

To the Christian no thought can be more cheerful, no reflection more sweet, than this : “ I am growing more and more like God ; I am growing in his favor ; I am growing in his likeness.” To the young it is a dim and bewildering thought ; to the aged it is a glowing realization. To the one class, heaven is remote ; a land to read of, to dream of, to speculate about ; a land lying low down in the west, whose shining shore is beaten by unseen waves : to the other it is not remote, but nigh. They know they are near to it, even as sailors in southern seas know

they are close upon an island at early dawn by the presence of fragrant boughs on the water, the perfume of flowers in the air, and the flash of tropic birds through the purpling mist. So the aged Christian, sailing out of the darkness of his mortal life, meets many premonitions of heaven as he draws near to it, and watches with holy and delightful sensations for the moment when over the waters of death the effulgence of its outstreaming glory shall flash upon him; and he murmurs, "Lord, I shall be content when I sleep, and awake in thy likeness."

My friends, what joy is equal to the joy you have when you feel that you are growing better? When a man can feel that he has mastered, or is surely mastering, some wicked passion; when he can feel that he is getting the better of some appetite which had endangered his usefulness and the happiness of his family; when he can feel temptation is losing its power over him, and victories are being more easily won; when he can feel the good impulses of his soul growing day by day stronger, and the evil day by day weaker,—he is then fast verging on a happiness the like of which his soul never felt. The man with such an experience has a right to exult. He has a right to hold up his head among men and before God. He is no longer in bondage. The fetters which lie at his feet witness to his liberty. Sin has no longer dominion over him. He has conquered that which conquered the world. Behind him, captivity walks a captive; and in the years to come his

soul shall have a throne high-lifted and prominent amid the thrones of heaven.

Now, such a man is growing in the grace and favor of God. God regards him with complacent affection. Through him he manifests his glory. For how does God manifest his glory? Is it through doctrines and formulas and creeds? — through confessions of faith, and covenants of man's make? — words, mere words? No. The man who grows in virtue, in purity of motive, in unselfishness of purpose, in honesty with his fellows; the woman who grows in patience, in moral whiteness, in a Mary-like love for the Master, — these are the mediums through which God reveals his nature and the workings of his truth. If every creed and theological dogma were blown to the winds, and lost to the memory of men, while such men and women lived, God would not lack a medium of expression, or the world testimony as to the truth as it is in Jesus. The Christ-like spirit, even more than the Christ-spoken letter, is what we and all the world need. We want fruitfulness on our barren fig-trees, and men who will go in and eat with, as well as pray for, the publicans. We want piety that shall not be ashamed to take vice by the hand, and lead it up to its own level. We want honesty inspired by something higher than fear of the jail. We want virtue strong, tender, and self-poised enough to send hyper-critical cruelty away when it draws its hateful circle around the weak and the wicked, and to stand up and say through the length and breadth of the land, "There is hope for the thief and the wanton in

Jesus." We have had enough of words: they have contributed more to the fighting than they have to the piety of the world. We want now labors of love; virtue strong enough to stand on its own feet, and filled with self-denying affection for God and man.

I have called your attention to three things, which, in appearance, a professing Christian has, — a knowledge of sin, higher motives than other men, and a desire to grow in the favor of God. Now, my friends, a person who makes claim to such knowledge, who professes such motives, and declares that he is pervaded with such a desire, is a very egotistical or a very good man. There are but three things such a man can possibly be. He is either self-deceived, a mere pretender, or an extraordinary character. He lays claim to so much, he makes profession of so much, that he must be either deluded, a hypocrite, or the possessor, to an unusual extent, of the virtue and knowledge which adorn a high order of development. His life is either a remarkable life, or it is the embodiment of the most detestable hypocrisy in the world.

Supposing it to be the latter, let us try to analyze its cause.

I remark, then, that a religious life, in appearance, may be the result of two widely-different causes.

First, It may be the result of design.

The world, in the civilized sections of it, has advanced so far in its estimation of right and wrong, that virtue pays. Business, in its lower and most

selfish instincts, smiles on honesty ; it courts morality ; it pays well for character. There is not a business-man here who does not know, that, the more men have confidence in his integrity, the better he is off in a worldly point of view. The best reputation a business-man can have is a reputation for uprightness. This stands him well in hand when many other things fail. A young man who cannot inspire men with this confidence in him might as well retire from commercial life, and go upon the race-course, or join a travelling-circus. Neither the money his father may leave him, nor the good name of his father, nor any low cunning and trickery, can make up his loss if he lacks this. The same is true in respect to one's social relations. A gross man, a man heavy with the mire of licentious indulgence, a young man who consorts with the reckless and the immoral, must conceal his vices ; he must rouge the red and bloated countenance of his habits with the preparation of secrecy : deceit is the necessity of his life, hypocrisy the refuge of his reputation. He must feign to be better than he is in order to escape universal condemnation. I do not doubt but that society is full of this virtue only in appearance, — this lustre and polish on the surface, when all is rotten at the core. Like the bark on a tree, this covering of morality is the last to crack and fall off from a man. The inward fibre of his life is reduced to a moral punk long before his evil habits have wormed themselves outward to the eyes of men. I do not wish to indulge in any captious or morbid reflections ; for I believe that the eyes and hearts of

most men are turned toward the good and the true. I believe the race is being lifted, and that the moral effort and hopes of the race are setting strongly on the flood ; but I doubt if any such blow could be delivered at public confidence in men, any such shock given our trust, as it would receive should the hearts of men be uncovered, and the secrets of their lives stand exposed. I do not doubt that many a life, like huge trees I have seen in the northern woods, would be found to be worm-eaten, and perforated through and through, as soon as the resinous bark was removed. There is too high a premium on hypocrisy, and too much necessity for disguise, I fear, not to have hypocrisy, and premeditated hypocrisy at that, abound.

Some, therefore, I have no doubt, are cautious and deceitful by design. Their virtue is not merely in appearance, but prompted by low cunning and the sheerest selfishness imaginable.

Second, A religious life in appearance may be the result of habit. There is a certain *vis inertia* in human nature which is very hard to overcome. Once let a person get settled down into any thing, let him once fairly get at rest in any position of mind, and it is very difficult to start him. Into such a fixed, un-plastic, and formalistic state a person may fall in respect to his religious condition, — a state of rebellious apathy and cool assurance, in which, without showing a single evidence of piety, he shall take it for granted that he is pious. This taking every thing for granted in respect to our religious condition is

very dangerous business at times: it deadens conscience, and blinds the eyes of the soul to its defects; it stops the ears to those warnings which God sends forth, as he sends thunders into the atmosphere by which men are advertised of the coming of tempest, and made sensible of a power greater than themselves; it drugs the moral sense, until the eyes of our watchfulness are heavy, and we sit and sleep in the midst of circling perils, and see not what foes are creeping up with malicious stealth, with their daggers drawn to stab us. Then it is that prayer becomes a mere form, and loses all saving force, and hastens us onward toward the awful catastrophe which it is intended of God to prevent. False security is peril in the superlative sense. Prayer itself is harmful if it eases conscience when conscience should be alarmed; if it inspires with hope when the man should be running about in despair; if it enables him to drown remorse when its upbraidings should sound like thunder in his ears; if it lulls and soothes a man when he should be stimulated and aroused. I believe it possible for a professor to be self-deceived without knowing it: the very exactness with which he performs his duty may become to him a matter of pride and self-righteousness, — a matter of reliance. Outwardly, he has all that any have. He does the same things that other professors do, uses the same words that they use; and why is he not like them? If they are not alarmed, why need he be? If they are doing their duty, why is he not? And yet all the while there is a certain emptiness in his experience, a cer-

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tain joy-lacking element in his life, which he feels, and at times wonders at. His life is a wretched, dragging sort of a life, after all. He does not run the race as one whose loins are girded, and whose hopes are high ; but he trails with a mechanical movement around the course, as one who runs because it is his lot to run, and not because he has any heart in it.

There is no life so irksome, friends, as the life of a professor who is a disciple only in appearance. To the man who is hypocritical by design, there is a certain zest in his imposition on mankind. There is need of adroitness and shrewd cunning in his game, and, at times, of not a little boldness. This stimulates him, and keeps him spry and on the alert. His delight is the delight of a devil, it is true ; but it is delight nevertheless, and often keen and pungent. Not so with the self-deceived professor, — a disciple only in outward habit. His life is a dull routine of duties, all the more irksome because faithfully performed. Each day is a treadmill, with its cheerless necessity of tiresome motion. Stop he cannot ; enjoy he cannot. He has no faith in what he pretends to believe, and wonders how people can talk so enthusiastically of their experience as some do.

Now, I think, if we closely observe ourselves, the best of us will find a tendency in us to lapse into this lethargic state, into this amiable routine of pious appearances. The frankness and candor in confession of sin, and of unsatisfactory spiritual condition, which, if practised, would go far to prevent it altogether, are very seldom seen or heard. There is

a certain pressure in religious circles to make everybody feel that he must call himself a saint, or lose caste. Even young converts, before examining-committees, labor under the impression that they are to answer "Yes" to every question touching spiritual development, no matter how unreasonable is the supposition upon which it is based. I have heard questions propounded to converts of four weeks' standing to which few professors of ten years' experience could affirmatively respond, and yet, under the pressure of this same sentiment, promptly answered. A word or two upon this point. Now, there are some experiences which come to one at conversion, and others come only through the processes of sanctification; and no pastor or committee has a right to put a question which shall force the candidate, in order to avoid embarrassment, to declare that a "grain of mustard-seed, which is the smallest of all seeds," is a mighty tree, so strong, so vast, so perfectly developed, that the birds of heaven come and make it their home.

If there is one thing which we need to guard our young people against, it is a false standard of spiritual development, and the exaggeration of personal attainments in piety. I have no sympathy with a forcing process in reference to young professors, any more than in reference to young horses. A man may assert before a committee that he feels so and so, has such and such views, which views and feelings can only come through a long lapse of years in Christian failure and victory; and all the while he

is exaggerating his spiritual attainment. There are feelings and experiences which a young girl of seventeen can have ; and there are others which none but the mothers in Israel, who have lived and suffered many weary years, can have : and this should be well understood. It is unseemly for the rough and unfinished block, but just lifted from the quarry-pit, to compare itself with a statue which the patient chiselling of many months has dressed into perfect symmetry ; and we all know how rough the nature of man is at the first, and how slowly it grows into the "perfect stature of Christ" under the gracious application of God's grace.

The age in which we live is a marked one in reference to what it professes. What it needs is a demonstration that its virtue is equal to its profession. No one has a right to seem to be better than he is. To assume by tone or looks, in prayer or exhortation, an anxiety for souls which you do not feel, a piety which you do not at heart have, is worse than bearing false witness against your neighbor : it is bearing false witness against your own soul and against Christ himself. I search in vain for words with which to lift and swing the weight of my detestation, and bring it down upon the head of cant and pious seeming. What we need at this time in the Church is a broad-chested, open-handed, frank-faced piety, unassuming and honest, ready to confess its failings and to remedy them. And the best rule that all of us, young or old, can adopt, is this : "I will be as good as I seem, and I will seem to

be no better than I am." Such a sentiment, lived up to, would carry us higher up the plane of Godlikeness than one might at first think.

My friends, we are all passing onward and upward to God. There is to us no resting or stopping until we stand before him. The day cometh when we shall have to give an account of ourselves. We are opaque now ; but by and by we shall be transparent to all eyes, and whatever is in us of evil will be seen. Here we can mask ; here we can wear veils ; here we can conceal and simulate : it will not be so in the hereafter. Before our destiny is fixed, we must be weighed. The years drift us like a swift tide. One by one, each in his own order and time, we are passing into a world and presence where appearances avail nothing, but where each will stand naked before the scrutiny of God. I ask you to anticipate that hour. I place you in thought before that great tribunal. Do you feel the concentration of eyes upon you ? Do you feel the penetration of their unerring inspection ? Do you feel the opening up of your thoughts, and revelation of your characters, before God ? Do you feel the observation of heaven centring upon you ? Do you feel the gaze of all its eyes ; the vision of countless faces ; the open, steady look of the great multitude ? If so, how is it with you ? Does your soul, in the strength of conscious rectitude, in the boldness of unflinching integrity, stand unappalled ? If so, rejoice ; for your feet are on the summit of the highest and most blessed realization possible unto man.

For one, I hold myself up to this supreme test. I count up my chances beforehand. No self-deception for me; no delusion of pious habits; no self-flattery through godly seeming; no faith in an unexemplified profession: these are not masonry to stand in the day of flood and the outpoured violence of that direful wind of which we are all warned. If the future were black, the soul, nevertheless, might gather strength by looking steadily into its eyes: but cowardice is the weakest and meanest of all refuges; and he who shrinks from facing his responsibility before God; who shrinks from giving personal attention touching God's feeling toward him; who thrusts religion aside as an unpleasant subject until death stands by his bed, fills the chamber with blackness, and peoples it with horrible forebodings, — such a man acts like a fool. Pardon the epithet. I use it because of its accuracy; for I submit to you all, — and I wish all of you to mentally answer yes or no, — I submit, if he is not a fool who sees and admits an unquestionable danger ahead, and yet makes no effort, not the least, to avoid it.

I pray you to understand that I lay claim to no larger share of caution than falls to the lot of ordinary men; and yet I am too wise and cautious, I trust, for that. I cannot afford to stumble carelessly, and with shut eyes, into the judgment. I cannot afford to be sucked into the rapids without a paddle in my hand. I wish to know, before my face is moist with the spray of that river in which so many men are wrecked, where the falls are, and on which bank stand

the angels of help. I am not ashamed to call to them : I do call to them daily. I expect to in that moment when I take the plunge. Something that I cannot get of myself must come to me before that hour, or I shall not be ready. Some mercy must be shown me, some pardon bestowed, or I shall stand guilty and condemned at the great inspection.

And now, my people, with the freedom of love, let me caution you against formalism in religion, against assumption and appearance in piety. Remember the Saviour's injunction ; keep in mind his example. Act better than you can talk. Let your character be nobler than your speech, even as the notes of some sweet or sublime passage in music are better than the words. Live so that your friends will love you more than you deem yourselves worthy to be loved ; and then you will, in truth, be loved of God.

SABBATH MORNING, NOV. 5, 1871.

SERMON.

TOPIC.—TRANSITION-PERIODS IN RELIGIOUS GROWTH AND TEACHINGS.

“THINK NOT THAT I AM COME TO DESTROY THE LAW OR THE PROPHETS:
I AM NOT COME TO DESTROY, BUT TO FULFIL.”—Matt. v. 17.

THE Jews were very jealous touching the Scriptures. The sacred writings were cherished with the utmost reverence: the resources of patience and skill were taxed in the interest of even their verbal preservation. As a people, they were bound to them by innumerable ties, the presence of which we do not feel to-day. Politically they were indebted to them for their very existence as a nation. In them was their constitution, the long list of legislative enactments, the judicial interpretation and decisions which explained and enforced these, and the ground of that wonderful authority on which was based the patriarchal government,—the government of a nation and race through the government of the family: for all this, and much beside, they were indebted to the Scriptures. In these books were also the treasures of their literature, the flowering-out of the nation's highest thought and emotion. Within them,

as in some noble gallery, were suspended their great names, — Moses, Elijah, Solomon, and David, — names that recalled all their past greatness, and suggested their future hope. To them they turned for their religious knowledge, and built upon their utterances the temple of their faith. Woe unto the man reckless enough to disturb a pebble that lay against its base !

Nor was this strictness altogether wrong. Indeed, every belief is sacred. Whatever touches man on the heavenward side should be regarded with reverence. The conclusions of the intellect are not necessarily vital, not necessarily dear. A man can be separated from them, and no great violence be done his feelings. It is otherwise with the heart. When a man's affections have become involved, he stands in a realm of mystic connections. He is woven in and meshed about with many ties. From these he cannot be sundered without receiving a shock which imperils his moral system. You cannot drop an emotion as you can an opinion. It is too late to transplant the flower after it has budded and blossomed. When thought has ripened into conviction, and conviction begot impulse, — on the movement of which the soul goes out, and is borne onward, as a great ship on some strong tide, — you cannot call it back ; you cannot undo the processes which led to the result ; you cannot obliterate it short of destruction. Now, when a soul has gone out along the line of some faith, and made connection with heaven ; when in hope and sympathy, in thought and expectation, it has taken hold of the invisible,

and what seems, at least to itself, supreme, — it is a grievous thing to turn it back, and wrench it off from that unto which it had come, and to which it was vitally united. That confidence which overlaps eternity is too blessed to be lost without a dire struggle and much suffering. Doubt in respect to some things is but another name for agony. Let suspicion, for instance, enter the bosom of love, and what writhings and convulsions occur! How peace, like a frightened and imperilled bird, flies away! How mistrust of every thing good follows close upon the heel of doubt as to what had seemed until then the great good! and the soul that had been in all its purposes and plans, its hopes and labors, like a well-built tower, crumbles into fragments; while its very loftiness serves only to make addition to the ruins. The re-action which impels a soul from trust to mistrust, from faith to infidelity, from a sense of security to one of danger or indifference, can produce nothing but wreck. Even the weaker class of minds, — those that take hold of things feebly; who are not overstrong in their inclinations, or sanguine in their aspirations, — even these suffer, and suffer intensely. What, then, must be the suffering experienced by strong, positive natures, — natures which ring themselves tightly around what they love, and cling passionately to what they regard as dear and sacred! To such men and women faith is a necessity. From it comes the natural food for their minds: it is to their intellects what wine is to the blood, — it fills it with warmth, and quickens it into swift motion. It kindles their imagination, and

is to the dull gray of ordinary thought what the flush of morning is to the slaty cloud: it makes the unlovely beautiful, and the commonplace marvellous. It provides their faculties a field in which to exercise; brings development to their capacities, and room for the free and innocent play of all their emotions. Now, when such men and women lose faith in God, or (what is the same thing, constituted as they are) when they lose faith in what they have always held as true, and leaned upon as something steadfast and perfect; when the ground of all their hope reels under their feet, and they are dashed upon the earth, and buried, as it were, beneath the fragments of what they had always looked upon as a perfect temple and a perfect refuge, — then are they brought low indeed. I stood upon the coast one day, crouching in the lee of a huge boulder, when the wind scooped great sheets of water out of the ocean, and blew them through the air, and the heavens were filled with howlings and shrieks, and strange wild cries; and standing there, sheltered in part from the terrible tempest, the plunging rain, and whistling sand, I saw a vessel part her cables, and go plunging out to sea. I knew from the start that there was no chance for her. The waves piled up against her, and rolled over her as if she were a log. Her masts were jerked out of her as though they had been icicles. The sea and the wind played with her, and a wild game they had of it; and, when they had tossed and buffeted her to their hearts' content, they flung her down into the trough of a great sea, and she disappeared in a mass

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of feathery foam. She was lost. And yet, if her cable had held, she would have outridden the gale, and served her proper use for years. And so it is with some men and women in respect to their faith in the Bible and God. So long as it holds, they are held safely; but if their faith gives way, if their confidence parts, they are blown out into all manner of mental and moral tumult, tossed and buffeted by tempestuous forces, and submerged at last in that ocean which is forever agitated, and which has no bottom.

It is just at this point that you get a glimpse of that grave responsibility that rests upon a religious teacher during a period of transition, of growth, of change in public views touching the interpretation of doctrines or church administration. How to crack the shell, and not destroy the germ; how to pull up the tares, and not disturb the wheat, in men's views; how to properly describe cant and hypocrisy, and not grieve honest but mistaken piety; how to fully and adequately advocate the new, without seeming to underrate or slander the good in the old, — this, I say, makes his responsibility a grave one; and great allowance in charity should be made for him whose mission it is to do this class of work. It is a thankless task to shock insensibility into feeling when the patient loves his paralysis. It is weary work to climb up over men's prejudices when they have been accustomed to look upon them as religious principles. It is not pleasant to take some hoary folly by the throat when a crowd of respectable people

are standing by and crying out "Murder!" A man who hews on such gnarled and knotty timber is pardonable if he strikes in deeper than the line, and lets his axe slip occasionally: you cannot make smooth work on such a job always. The public preacher should be judged charitably, and not harshly, in these matters, where it is easy to err; where the line of propriety is ever changing, and no two men would agree as to just where it should be snapped. But when every allowance has been made, and the widest possible margin of liberty of utterance granted that can with any show of justice be claimed, still this remains true, — that no speaker has a moral right to mole at random under conscientious belief, or thrust his spade carelessly into the most fragrant borders of a man's life. The surgeon has no right to thrust his probe into an unwounded breast. It is, as I look at it, nothing short of a horrible perversion of his office, and abuse of his high prerogatives, when one uses a clergyman's name and a clergyman's opportunities to destroy the people's confidence in a book whose expounder he nominally is, and the sway of whose authority over the public conscience he should zealously and reverently seek to extend. He who uses the sacred groves as an ambush from which to shoot his envenomed arrows at passing pilgrims; who insidiously seeks to weaken the girdle by which the loins of public virtue are strengthened; who, in the name of religion, strives to make religion unpopular by bringing discredit upon its most correct and salutary interpretation; who piously ridicules piety; who uses

his talents and the resources of knowledge to suggest objections to what every interest, whether of the individual or of the community, demands should appear as unobjectionable, — such a person does what, as it seems to me, is irreconcilable with prudence and piety. There is no danger, friends, that Americans will be over-conservative; no danger that character will be over-stable, or not sufficiently susceptible of change. Our land is full of sceptical and antagonistic elements. The recklessness and ignorance and violence of every clime find a home with us. The future is full of that heat which suggests thunder, of that blackness which breeds whirlwinds. The elements of explosion should not be stimulated. The American temperament is sufficiently volcanic already: it is not wise to add to its inward heat and fervor. When the axles smoke, it is time to slow up, and cool down the boxes: and we Americans, as a people, are being driven in all our moral and spiritual faculties too fast; we are running at too high a pressure: we need to down brakes, and cool off a while. Our young men — the average clerk and the average student — are not over-reverential, — they do not suffer on that side; they are not over-conservative; they are not painfully steady and methodical; they are not injuriously affected by tradition; they do not seem to be unduly fond of precedent: their religious teachers need not labor to deliver them from any supposed bondage in this direction; need not strive to weaken their faith in the Bible, or persuade them to ignore its ethics. The danger of the age is, not bigotry or over-strictness of

views, but rather license and looseness of opinion, recklessness and incontinency. Fickleness, and not fidelity, is what we may dread.

My friends, the past may be buried, but not ridiculed. I would help make a grave for its deadness, but will help no one revile the corpse. With my eyes fastened on the beauty of the flower, and inhaling its sweetness, I should think tenderly of the cloven shell in which once lay the germ of all its loveliness and perfume. Only when men strive to put the parted shuck around the blossom, only when they strive to hide life within deadness, and wrap corruption around the incorruptible, would I resist them, and say, "Down and away with that which has been, but has answered its designed end, and is needed no more!" Then would I strive to make men see that what covered the germ cannot enclose the flower; what held the seed cannot contain the harvest. I know well that wit and humor have their use, and that satire and invective are weapons needed by one who would have a perfect equipment for battle. Not rarely must the public leader rely on these in the emergencies of his career. Many things which defy argument, and are deaf to entreaty, quail before a laugh. Satire often cuts deeper than logic; and many an impediment is swept from the path of truth by the swing and momentum of invective and impeachment, which neither argument nor persuasion could move an inch. For one, I have no scruple to use these, and all potent forces of nature and education, to assist me in my desire to beat down the false and needless in custom and

habit, in manner and life, among men. If I can satirize hypocrisy out of its self-conceit, then I will use satire. If I can shake enthroned stupidity from its seat with a laugh, then I will try laughter. If I cannot put bigotry and bitterness to flight with statement, then I will gather up and launch against them all the bolts of a lightning-hot denunciation. If I cannot reach the giant with my spear, then will I wait until he sleeps, and, creeping quietly within reach, spike him through the eye. It is all nonsense to talk about "legitimate weapons" in such a warfare. Whatever kills the foe is legitimate. Whatever lessens the sum total of hypocrisy in the world; whatever clears away the obstacles which boulder up the path along which the Church, with an ever-accelerating movement, is to advance to her perfect triumph; whatever makes cant unfashionable, and advertises a correct model of Christian deportment to the churches, — whatever does this is right and proper. All this I believe; and yet these powers and agencies may be and often are misused, and unnecessary antagonisms introduced, and needless conflict engendered.

Of course I do not expect, for one, I do not see how any thinking man can expect, that the transitions from the lower to the higher, from the contracted to the liberal, from the mere formal to the truly spiritual, in administration of religion, will be easy or peaceful. All germination comes through disruption. The tough shell must be parted before the oak can appear. The hide-bound fallow must be rent and pulverized or ever the seed can be sown. True excel-

lence is known as such through the opposition that it meets. This advertises and confirms it. There has always been, and I presume that there always will be, a strong stationary element in our churches. Progress must ever beat its way up against wind and tide. Every proposition submitted to a people will always have a party opposed to it. Not once in a hundred times is a needed change made unanimously. It is in vain to expect unanimity. The command is, "*Fight and pray*;" and I know of no other injunction likely to be so well obeyed in the churches! The future will be as the past. Through fire and smoke, amid contention and the tumult of many contestants, the banners of God will be borne to victory: I have no doubt of the victory, nor any doubt that the banners will be sadly soiled and rent when the angel shall group them at last in the capitol of universal peace.

I say these things as talking directly to you who must do the planning of the next forty years. The gravest of all blunders a man can make to-day is to suppose that the great issues of political government and religious administration are settled; that the great occasions and critical emergencies of the world are passed: he must be stupid indeed who thinks that. Why, the globe is not half examined even in its material resources. Undiscovered laws, unascertained forces, undeveloped capacities, are all around us: the earth and air are vibrant with the passing of powers known to us only as hints, as suspicions, as possibilities; known, in short, only as the unknown. In intellectual development, only one-twentieth of the race,

as yet, are cognizant of their own minds. As with babes, intelligence is unintelligible to them : they are insensible to all the power and pleasure of it, to all its light and life. They have not yet woven or seen a thread of that mantle which the race, when it shall have come to its full stature, to the strength and majesty of its final growth, will be clothed in as with a royal vesture. The war against ignorance, even in its barbaric and grosser forms, is not ended yet, friends. The sun can traverse nearly a hemisphere, and not, with the searching of all its rays, find a school-house. Even in America, we have only mastered the alphabet of that sublime language in which every child shall in some far-off day talk,—the language of equal rights, of justice unswayed by prejudice, of Christian charity, and universal brotherhood. Oh that my tongue, before I die, might master the sweet mystery of that speech ! Oh that my ears might be filled, before the irremediable deafness comes to them, with the melody of that language ! I feel as one who stands upon the rocky coast of a turbulent sea, whose farther and far-off shore of eternal calm, of genial climate, and fragrant air, he will never behold. Others, born later and born purer, shall sail out, and cross it, pass beyond billows and the force of gales, and live without struggle with themselves or others ; but not I. I, and you who are of my generation, and those of many generations yet to come, will be buffeted and blown upon adversely, and die at last, as ships, that strive vainly to make port, sink, going down amid tumults, with what we strove to effect unaccomplished. But

we will not lament: a larger growth, a nobler manhood and womanhood, a patience otherwise unattainable, may come to us by virtue of our struggling: we shall brace ourselves with the bands of power by effort; we shall grow brawn by striking; we shall become mightier through persistence.

This, also, I wish to say to you,—that I feel persuaded that a higher, fuller, deeper, and richer spiritual life will yet be known in the Church. Christianity—the warm, the beautiful, the sweet Christianity of the New Testament—shall yet receive a perfect expression in the lives of its disciples. Now we struggle most to keep its moralities: with this our ambition stops. By and by we shall pass beyond this. Now, like young birds, we aim no higher than the lowest bough, content if our best flight gives us a safe perch, and lifts us above and beyond the reach of crawling temptations. By and by we shall go higher; we shall stand amid the uppermost branches, and feed on fruit which feels the earliest beam of morning, and retains, to assist its sweet chemistry, the last warm ray of the declining orb. I am persuaded that God has not revealed all of himself to one generation,—not even to this. Knowledge of God, and hence love for him, and life in him, will grow with the growth of the human understanding; and God will appear more and more lovely to the minds and hearts of men as the ages pass. Piety will be estimated less by obedience to the letter, and more by its harmony with the spirit. Negation in habits, and repression of thoughts, will not then ex-

press man's virtue. His soul shall catch a higher conception of goodness, — even that of ardent affections justified by their purity ; of thought, rejoicing like a dove in the whiteness of its own plumage ; of imagination, so little of this world, that it forestalls death, and makes it but an incident, like what a transverse gust of wind is to a bird, marking the straight line of its homeward flight with a slight curve. I have no faith in the “higher-life” piety that is being so vigorously and loudly advertised to the public and the churches by self-constituted saints. I prefer good, solid, spiritual healthfulness to heavenly spasms. A man who cannot speak kindly and courteously of a Unitarian or a Universalist cannot be ranked very high up on the scale of perfection by any pulpit that I stand in. If religion has failed to make him humane, and courteous of speech, it certainly has not made him Christlike in heart. If he is not fit for respectable and well-bred society, he surely is not fit for heaven. You must snap the line on these crooked sticks somewhere ; and that is where I let it fall. I do not say that many of these people are not sincere ; but I do say that they are wonderfully ignorant. Their “gift of sight” consists, as it seems to me, in not seeing their own failings. There is a deal of loud talking and exhortation done by people who would be vastly benefited, as a matter of discipline, by half an hour's silence ! When a prayer-meeting falls into the hands of these religious “repeaters,” sensible people stay away. The surest way to keep an unconverted man

unconverted is to disgust him. I hope every Christian in the land will improve his gifts, including the gift to sit still! And yet, friends, I believe in a "higher life," — a life of meditation, of study, of growth and love. I believe that there is an experience sweeter and holier than most of us attain; a receptive and retaining state of mind, which receives and reflects God as some secluded lake far off amid the hills receives within its clear depths the shadows of the mountains out of whose other depths its deeps come, and the blue of heaven overhead, and the lustrous stars. So the soul of some, at times lying, as it were, close up to and underneath God, capable of reflecting him because of him, receives into its depths his image, and is made beautiful by mirroring the beauty that is in him, and hence stretching wide and far over itself. But, friends, this blessed condition of mind comes only to those who ponder and suffer and think; to those who climb toilsomely the heights of spiritual understanding; who suffer greatly, and by great sufferings are made great themselves; who watch, with their white faces pressed against the pane, patiently, with eyes that never droop, for the coming of some holy and desired thing, and at last see it, but on the other side of death, which, with the sight of it, came to them, and so are they made content: or it may be to a few specially favored of God by reason of something known only to him; to such there may indeed come a higher life of faith and hope and love.

By and by, as I think, it will come to many, per-

haps to all believing souls, come to the churches along the avenue of ordinary spiritual development, by reason of fuller knowledge of God and better application of the Scriptures. God now is interpreted only on his theological side; imperfectly at that. The time will come when he shall have a far truer, because more complete, interpretation. He shall be interpreted on the side of art, and the chisel and sounding-string will express him; on the side of science also, and the elements in all their admirable combinations and relations shall praise him; in the administration of governments, and the earth shall know that the Lord reigneth; in the humanities and sympathies of man for man as a full brother, and all shall honor God as the great head of a universal brotherhood. Now, before any such interpretation will be given to God, a great change must come over men's views and habits. The Church itself must be revolutionized, and many things excised, and much ingrafted. The branches are not yet grown that can bear such fruit. New ideas must first be proclaimed and received, antagonisms be introduced and expend their force, conflicts be joined, and alienations occur, or ever such an interpretation of God be known or received. The future will see some brave wrestling; and not a few of us will get falls. And yet this should be borne in mind, that whatever is organic, whatever is fundamental, in religion, never changes. There are many degrees of light; there are many shades of color: but the sun itself remains from day to day, and age to age, unchanged. Ceremonies may

be multiplied or lessened ; creeds changed to suit the fickleness or growth of the human mind ; organizations of vast power be built, and crumble into pieces ; the mode and method of administration vary among various people and at different times : but truth itself is everlasting, and not subject to change. Heaven and earth may pass away ; but not one jot or tittle of it shall perish. The great doctrines of the Bible are what they have always been. The wickedness of man ; the love of God in Christ ; the power of the Spirit ; the immortality of the soul ; the atonement made for sin on Calvary, through which alone may come salvation to the lost, — these, my friends, are mountains ; and the passage of no thunder through the air can move them an inch. Clouds may settle around them, tempests search their sides, lightnings scar their surface, and fires girdle their slopes ; but neither cloud nor storm, neither lightning nor the fierceness of many fires, can ever remove them from the landscape of divine truth. For ages they have stood, and for all ages will they stand, outlined in grandeur, their vast proportions brought into bold relief against the background of the eternal world.

The way to bring the race more and more under the power of true religion ; the way to inculcate the divine life, and push man on in the harmonious development of all his faculties, which, when carried to its last and perfect stage, constitutes holiness, — is not through destructive processes of thought ; not through a philosophy antagonistic to the plan of salvation as published in the Gospels ; not through criticism, and

demolition of men's faith. Nor does it lie in the direction of mental gymnastics and a culture superficial; because it does not meet the deep, spiritual necessities of the soul. There is a life better than the brain-life, and a wisdom higher than the knowledge of books. Because the religious expression of this age is imperfect, religion is not to be discarded, but carried up through successive stages of development, until it finds a perfect expression in the conscience and conduct of the nation and of the race. It is as a flower in the bud. Its floral state is not yet reached. It needs time; it needs culture; it needs the succession of days and nights, each operant in their way, and the changeful ministries of earth and sky; and, when these have come to it in full measure, it shall flower out, and the whole world be filled with its fragrance. And none are so mistaken as those who would rudely break the stem because the bud is not yet fully opened.

Error in this country has always made this stupid blunder, — it has adopted the destructive process. It has acted like a gardener who should take a mallet, and not a spade, an axe, and not a pruning-knife, into the garden. It has beaten down the most fragrant hopes of men's souls; it has struck cruel blows at the tender roots of cherished faith; it has shocked man's reverence, and sneered at his trust in God. Its advocates forgot that a destructive philosophy can never be attached to a successful religion. They who rend and pull down can never hold their own beside one who puts together and constructs. A

religion of negation is powerless over against a religion of affirmation. Like a surgeon who forgets the proprieties, they have the pleasure of making savage remarks ; but they lose their patients.

And now, friends, let us see where we stand. We are not in a transition from one form of doctrinal interpretation to another ; but we are in a transition from one form of administration to another. We do not do things as our fathers did. The thoughts that are the working, the leaven-like thoughts in New England, are not their thoughts ; nor are our ways their ways. Nor have we as yet touched the limit of change. Not by reason of its fickleness, but by reason of its social and spiritual necessities, will the future modify our work of to-day. The divine wind is coursing through the heavens, and our cloud-like misconceptions will be blown away. I am anxious only that the transitions be peaceful ; that changes be in the order of growth, and not of revolution ; that the churches shall not resist the inevitable, nor stop their ears to the voice of the angels that God from time to time shall send to them. Bigotry means war ; stupidity, and excessive slowness to act, mean dissension. When men get egotistical, and refuse to be students of his will, God mortifies them. The age spins ; and we must revolve with it, or be thrown out of the circle of its activities. He who lags behind God loses sight of God's face. If you feel the need of his guidance, hurry on, and keep close by his side.

The greatest question — the highest peak in the

whole range — which now confronts us, is, How shall the masses have the gospel preached to them? how shall they be reached by the divine influence? I confess that I am greatly burdened by this thought. I sleep at night with the moan of an uneasy sea in my ears, and dream of shrieks in the air, and wild cries as of men drowning. As I stand before you here, day after day, I catch the glimpse of another audience standing back of you, and enclosing you about as the many enclose the few. Many are wild and lawless and wicked, and some unfortunate, and they hear no preacher; and yet I fancy they might. I see many churches going up, but none for these: voices by the score are preaching in this city to-day; but no voice preaches to them. The preachers of God are monopolized by the few, and religion has become a luxury. The table is spread with twice the amount of food that the sitters can eat, — spread for satiety, and not for necessity; and all the while gaunt faces look over your shoulders hungrily. Shall they go unfed? I do not impeach your benevolence: I impeach the miserable fashion of church-building, and that inadequate system of religious administration in this city which makes provision for the spiritual needs of only two out of every five of your population. Some of us, before we die, must think this thing out. We must lead investigation with a weight that will cause it to touch bottom. We must keep changing the imperfect until we have found the perfect. Transitions must go on until the useless and inadequate in the old have passed away, and all things have become

new. The hand must not let go the ropes: the bells must be kept in motion, until each sound shall find its proper place in that sweet tune whose line shall then go out through all the earth, and whose words to the end of the world.

SABBATH MORNING, NOV. 12, 1871.

SERMON.

TOPIC.—THE TWO IMMORTALITIES.

“FOR NONE OF US LIVETH TO HIMSELF, AND NO MAN DIETH TO HIMSELF.”—Rom. xiv. 7.

IT is a common form of expression to say of a man when he is dead, that “he has gone.” The way that it represents itself to the public mind is, that there is one less person on the earth: its population has been decreased by one; and whatever of force for good or evil he represented has suffered a diminution. This conception admits the immortality of man, but thinks of it as going out of the world with him; as being entirely taken away when he withdraws from sight; and that nothing remains but the gap his retirement made, and a memory that he once existed.

Now, it seems to me, friends, that this statement is not entirely correct. The entire truth is not brought out by this way of putting it. The fact is, that man leaves more than a gap and a memory behind him at death. He leaves words and deeds and forces and tendencies, and the thousand and one influences which represent power; and these remain, not for one year

or two, but for all time. In one sense, and a very important one too, the man never dies, — never leaves the earth at all. His bodily departure caused no such gap amid the ranks of forceful energies as some think. He had a duplicate form of existence; he had two immortalities, — one he took with him at death, the other he did not and could not take with him; and it remains still, and always will, as his true self, working as it always worked, influencing as it always influenced.

In many instances this is observed and admitted. The author, the orator, the musical composer, the inventor of useful expedients to assist industry, the architect, and all that vast multitude of men who originated new trains of thought, started new forces into life, organized powerful elements, utilized what was previously useless, opened up new paths for the feet of science, and set the chimes of progress to a holier movement, — none of you object to the saying that such men cannot die, even to the earth; cannot remove themselves, or be removed, from the position they hold and honor as powers and forces in society. He who teaches some one to think deeper than he would otherwise have thought is forever thinking himself; and he lives in the activities of other minds which he started from lethargy and set in motion. He who invents any thing quickens the inventive faculties in others, and hence becomes the parent of a vast family of inventions, and is perpetuated in them. What countless inventions Fulton's steam-engine has originated! What marvellous discoveries

Franklin's investigations have begotten! How the poor, ridiculed Goodyear, persisting in his experiments with a perseverance so far beyond what the world named by that term, that it called it insanity, — how Goodyear still lives and works and perseveres! Are these men, and their companions in effort and usefulness, gone? Did they entirely retire from the world at death? Did charity or affection shut all of them that God permits to be on the earth under the coffin-lid? and does the grave imprison it to-day? Why, no, friends: such men do not leave the earth. They cannot go into exile. Their citizenship with the race is perpetual, and their labors for man ceaseless.

But what shall we say of lesser men, whose powers are less advertised, whose influence is less tangible, — men who had no visible greatness, and yet exerted, according to the measure of their ability and the opportunity of their fortune, their legitimate influence? Is not every drop of falling rain water, — the same in its elements as the body of the great ocean? Is not wind wind, although you cannot locate it, or gauge its pressure, or trace its airy path through the heavens? And do not all these men, these rain-drop men, these wind-like men, that you cannot locate in space or time, but were, nevertheless, forceful, each in his way, — are these not all one with the others in their constituent characteristics? Have they not all entered into and become mingled to-day with the vast body of moral and spiritual influence around us? Undoubtedly. It must be so. As the father lives in

his child ; as the rain lives again in the rising vapor ; as the dying taper lives in the bright flame, which, before it went out, it kindled ; as the dead leaf lives again in the living green overhead, which, by its own decay, it has fed and nourished : so these men are all living still ; living in us and in others ; living in things seen and in things unseen ; in causes that we behold, and in causes which, though invisible, are nevertheless operant. And, with such a train of thought in mind, I say to myself, “ Man has two immortalities : one he takes with him at death ; the other he leaves behind on the earth to represent him after he has gone. And of this representative immortality after death I am now to speak.

The usual assertion is, that a selfish man lives for himself. In one sense, he does : in his plans and hopes and efforts he does live for himself. He concentrates and circumscribes every thing he can lay his hands on within that little circle which has his own advantage for its centre. He makes a sort of sponge of himself, and fills himself with powers of suction, that he may the better absorb and appropriate for his own fulness whatever he touches. If he touches a man in trade, the man is a loser, unless he is as sponge-like as himself ; in which case it is a mutual contest between suctions, and the issue is about equal. And I wish that all these men, these human sponges, who pervert the blessing of prosperity into food for their selfishness, and grow more and more tricky and miserly and exacting as they grow wealthy, — I wish all such men, who cheat and rob

and oppress legally, and set a false standard of success before the young men of the country, might be penned up together in one street or section of the city, and compelled to do business only with each other: then we should all see that it is one thing to do business in an honest, manly, and honorable way, but an altogether different affair to use the facilities of commerce and the combinations of trade as the safe way to cheat and lie and steal.

The worst thing about incarnated selfishness is, that it does not die with the man whom it has cursed and used. If sin were mortal, then thirty years would swing the world over into the millennium: we should bury it with the next generation. But it is not mortal. Its endurance is interminable. It is not barren, but prolific; it propagates itself; it has parental functions, and sends its children out in swarms to possess the earth. I wish you all to understand, that whatever evil you are tolerating in your lives will live after you are gone: you will pass away; but this shall not pass away. One immortality you will take with you at death; another you will leave behind. It shall stand above your grave when the mound is fashioned and the mourners depart, and shake itself as a strong man rejoicing in his strength, and go forth as one of the forces of the world. It will be impersonal; it will have no name; it will show no face: and yet it will be you, your worse self, unchecked, unrestrained by the good that was once mated with it, and that kept it within bounds. It is in the moral and spiritual as it is in the material world. There

are elements, and basal principles, and constituent forces; and the laws that govern them are subtle, but potent. They arrange themselves into groups and tribes and families, according to their affinities; and they are full of attractions for whatever is like to them: and so it comes about, that evil is forever growing, and must forever grow, by addition and accretion, so long as elements are multiplied which can swell its bulk. Into the arcana of evil all evil that is generated in us passes, and takes its own peculiar embodiment perpetually. It is said that one cannot stir the air with a sound so soft and slight that it will ever cease to be a sound. The words we speak, whether of love or hate, whether pure or vile, start pulsations in the air that will never cease to throb. You cannot open your lips, and start a motion in the atmosphere, which shall not, like a wave on a shoreless sea, whose forces are within itself and adequate, roll on and on forever. An oath once spoken sounds forever in the universe as an oath: it is an explosion, whose reverberations can never die. They roll around all continents; they crash against the sides of all mountains; they beat discordantly in upon the atmosphere of all worlds: the devils hear them, and rejoice; the holy, and fly away in dismay. And, at the judgment, why may we not suppose that these sounds shall all come back to us, — the good in soothing music, and the evil in torturing discord? and every man shall be judged according to the words of his mouth. Indeed, it seems to me that every thing in man that is of the mind and soul is immortal. The

offspring are heirs of the parental nature, and hence deathless. Not only words, but even our thoughts and our imaginations, being potent, die not. They live, in their effects, primarily on us, and through us in others, being transmitted. They fade from memory; they are not entered in the catalogue of recollection: but, amid the shaping and inspiring forces of the universe, they have an eternal residence and mention. Upon the heels of this thought, as one racing after a flying opportunity, repentance comes pantingly. It shouts to the flying thought, "Come back! you are not fit to go forth to be seen of all." To some disappearing imagination it says, "Stop! thou art unclean; thou art not fit to represent me. Cursed be the sight or sound that suggested thee!" And to every thing evil that has gone out of us it calls, and petitions that it go no farther, but come back, and die, like some awful and unfit birth, in the bed where it was born. But the wicked thought, and impure fancy, and the unnamed evil, whatever it be, will not come back. They hear no prayer; they laugh at the petition: they roll on in spite of human agony. The dove will come back to its cage; for it is tamable, and, like all innocent things, loves companionship, and covets no secrecy: but the young vulture, once having broken its chain or overflowed the wire, returns no more, but sails away on wings that grow and darken as they sail, guided in its cruel flights only by the license of its coarse instincts. So is it with sin. Once out of our reach, it is forever beyond our control: we cannot check it; we cannot

limit it even. Like a freed vulture, we know not where it will fly; we know not on what innocent thing it will pounce, what it shall mangle, or what other sins like unto itself it shall beget. Would to God it were not so! Would to God we might all undo what we have spoken and done and thought of evil! What a load would be lifted from our consciences! What a blessed ebb would drain away the great and bitter waves of remorse which now roll thunderously in upon our hopes, submerging them! How would we leap to our feet, and pour out our cries, and beat the air above our heads with our clasped and entreating hands! and when the evil that had gone out of us had all come back to us, and been gathered in like redeemed notes, and destroyed, and the ashes lay around our feet, representing no power, no obligation, no possibility of harm whatever, what rejoicing there would be here! and how this room would resound with shouts of gladness, and hymns of praise! and you would clasp each other's hands, while the great tears rolled down your faces, and say, "Thank God! the evil that I have done, and the remembrance of which has tortured me, is undone at last! Now, when I am dead, the evil that I have done will be dead too, and no one will be able to say that the world was made worse because I lived."

You see now how it comes about that a selfish man cannot live within the circle of his own selfishness. He cannot lift the dikes so high that the ebbless and tempestuous forces of evil in him will not break over them, and sweep them away, and submerge the fruit-

fulness of other and better lives. You men who do business to-day in this city are deciding how business shall be done here after you are gone. If you rob and cheat each other; if you seek to outwit and overreach each other; if you make it appear that commercial success depends on cunning and trickery; that competition in trade knows no friendship, and acknowledges no generosity; that the great thing is to become rich and potential, irrespective of other men's rights; that rivalry in business cannot be noble and generous, but only and forever mean and envious, — then will you set business at war with manhood, and make prosperity hostile to religion. The evil you do will never be seen until after you are gone, and your sons and your present clerks fill the places you now fill: then will the tares, which looked so innocent as seeds when you were sowing them, be seen in all the abounding destructiveness of their maturity. The selfishness which possessed you only in part shall possess them wholly; what floated around you in chaotic, elementary state, shall crystallize solidly around them; and the questionable processes to which you resort only occasionally, and in what you call emergencies, will be the common and universally-adopted rule of their business-career. What will be the character of this city then? what the character of its men and its women and its youth? What use will wealth make of itself, think you, amassed under such a coarse stimulant, and by such tricky and dishonorable methods? Talk about Christian fellowship and fraternal love existing in such a city! why, friends, you know that it could not be. You

might import every pulpit in the land, and crowd them all in until the spires were so thick, that, standing on the dome of the State House, you could not see Boston Highlands or Bunker-hill Monument; and, in less than six months, every minister that could be would be flattered or bribed into silence, and the others be preaching to empty seats, or persecuted out of the city. Did you ever know an instance where wealth unjustly gained and selfishly used listened placidly to the word of God, which, when nobly preached, is to it what the shaft of lightning is to the rotten pine, — riving it from its lifeless top to its dead roots, and scattering it in bits of flying punk in all directions? In such an atmosphere, I tell you, piety could not live. It would strangle as a man enveloped in coal-damp. When the young men in this city see nothing more noble in trade, nothing more useful in commerce, nothing more lofty in business, than money-getting; when honor and honesty and friendship, in the sense that our fathers interpreted them, shall become obsolete terms on State Street, or mentioned as “old-fogy notions;” when the road that leads to financial success in Boston shall be paved only with trickery and deceit, and a low, thief-like cunning, — when that hour comes, if, unfortunately, it ever shall, your city will stand disgraced before the face of the earth, and your sons and daughters accursed of God.

I know that most men desire posthumous reputation; and I hope that I do not fail to appreciate the possible nobility of such a yearning. It is indeed an exalted and exalting thought to think that one can

live on and on after death; that death is not the powerful and destructive thing that the unenlightened represent it to be, — able to break in upon and break up all the forces of one's life, bringing disruption and a sudden stoppage to all the forceful currents of his energies; that it takes the visible, but leaves behind, untouched, unlesened, a representation of your abilities more potential than the seen; so that a man is not changed, even in respect to the locality of his influence, but remains working where he has always worked, and shaping what he has always shaped, even more mightily after than before his body was buried. I suppose that most of us have felt this at times, — felt the brevity of bodily existence, and rebelled generously against it. I know nothing sweeter than to dream that you will leave something to be your representative on the earth after you have passed within the veil and become invisible, — even as the sun, on some bright day, leaves this for another hemisphere, and disappears from the eyes of those who stand admiringly watching it, but leaves behind, at its departure, spear-like formations along the sky, and the air full of golden haze. For one, I sympathize with this sentiment, this warning. The most tender and consoling sentence of all the sweet ones uttered by Christ to his disciples, when preparing their minds and hearts for his departure, was this: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you again." That buoyed their sinking spirits up, and sustained them. This is the language of expiring love the world over, and in all ages. For one, I hate the doctrine of for-

getfulness at death, and the sudden cessation of whatever good I have succeeded in starting. I would live so as to compel remembrance. I would have my life like the great river that flows and flows on long after the forests have been swept from the mountains, and the little spring, where in the beginning it was born, has become dry, and all trace of it lost beneath the grave which Nature makes from her matted grasses and dying leaves. I would feel that those whom I have loved, and who loved me, for whom I have toiled, and perhaps suffered some things, could not forget; that when my voice was hushed, and the tired hand had become still, they would feel my guidance in a thousand warnings, my ministries in a thousand comforts, and whatever was sweet and strength-giving in me in a thousand memories. Who, that loves or thinks or feels the promptings of his immortality, would have his face entirely hidden, and the sound of his voice utterly and forever silenced, in the grave? What generous and faithful soul can endure that definition of death which makes it mean only a union with those gone before, while it totally separates him from the dear ones left behind? If that is dying, then I am not ready to die; nor does it seem that I could ever be. This aspiration I hold to be legitimate. It finds its justification in that great law of love which makes it treachery for love to forget love. Some fragrance will remain in the casket, although the flower has been long from the stem on which it budded, and the bloom it had, when with others it hung over the tide, has departed.

But, friends, sweet as it is, nevertheless it is a grave and most solemn thought to think that you are to continue to live on thus endlessly. Whom is it that you are to influence after you are dead? What sort of influence will it be? — how will it affect them? What is there in our character and conduct that we would like to change, were we to-day in eternity, and looking back upon ourselves? Is it our manner of speech, our motive and method of doing business, our way of using our wealth or bearing our poverty? or is it some habit which leeches us dangerously? Such questions are the natural ones for us to answer at this time, as we sit under the shadow of the interrogations which project gloomily over us from the future. Whatever it is, my hearers, change it now. Now you can change; now you can modify yourselves: by and by you cannot. To-day you can re-form and re-construct your whole life: to-morrow you may not be able to alter it the tithe of a hair. Now every thing is plastic; your life, in all its conditions and proportions, is, as it were, in a volatile state; you can cause it to crystallize into whatever shape you please: by and by every thing in and about you will be fixed. The chisel that is steel to-day will become lead to-morrow; and the sand-stone, granite; and, if the statue be deformed, its deformity shall stand, and give you shameful advertisement forever. Whatever there is, therefore, in your life that should be hewn off, hew it off to-day; if for no other reason, for this at least, — lest you be responsible for the evil in those who caught it

from you. Now and then, I have seen men whose character and influence, otherwise perfect, were marred by the presence of some one unfortunate or sinful habit, as a scar on the human face, or the maleformation of some one feature, mars the entire countenance, and is made especially repulsive by reason of the otherwise perfect loveliness which it alone disfigures. I wonder if any of you can possibly be affected in this way. Who of us is it that is perfect in all save one, but, being imperfect in one, is imperfect in all? Is there a man present, for instance, given to the vice of profanity? If so, I urge you, friend, to reform your speech. This is the very day and place for you to think the matter over, and make the right resolve. I might press you with reasons: I mention only this, — your profanity is making others profane. I presume that there is not a nation on the globe where profanity is so common, so coarse, so violently blasphemous, as in America. The sensitive ear hears it everywhere, — on the street, at the dépôt, and on the cars, on wharves and the decks of ships, in the stable, and at hotels: everywhere, save at funerals and in the chamber of death, you hear the awful utterance against God's name and law. What a vast volume of rending, riving sounds passes up daily into the heavens! How the innocent and timid air shivers and shrinks at the awful word, the coarse allusion, and the blasphemous jest! What patience there must be in God to endure it! Who can measure that forbearance which tolerates, that love which pities, and that mercy which forgives? What man is there of you all,

here to-day, who can henceforth make this bad condition of our language and our morals worse? Who of you can ever again give the influence of your example to push on, deepen, and confirm this national sin? Woe unto you if you do! for your profanity will make others profane, and all your oaths keep repeating themselves, and roll on forever after you are gone. Have any of you the habit of resorting to stimulants as a source of health, of strength, or happiness? Are any of you living unworthily, on the level of your appetites and passions, and not of reason and conscience? If you are, I exhort you to break off; if not for your own sakes, then for the sake of others. If you are not in danger of becoming intemperate yourself, you are doing the very thing calculated to make others intemperate. By your example, you are putting the bottle to your neighbor's lips. The poison of your own breath you are breathing into other men's faces, and some will receive the contagion, and be stricken with the disease which eats out all manhood, and die; and unless you are careful, when, in the last analysis of cause and effect, God shall unveil every thing, their death will be traced directly up to you. Are any of you purposely sceptical? Is your mistrust or denial of God's claims upon you a talkative one? Do you boast of having thought deeply, and to no purpose, upon the claims of the Bible, when you have never thought below the surface of personal vanity and a boastful glibness of tongue? My friends, there is a scepticism that I can respect, and God can forgive. Some men are born with a

strong sceptical bias ; to others, religion has been made to seem unreal by the hypocrisy and inconsistency of its professors. Its interpretation has been so bad, that they could not love it. Some have thought themselves into instability of faith. They grappled with the great mysteries of God's nature and providence, and were thrown ; and the shock stunned them, and they are bewildered and dazed, and see all things dancing, as it were, before their eyes, and nothing steadfast. With such I can sympathize. He who voyages day after day in the great ocean of religious investigation is blown upon by many a gale ; and it is not surprising if the prow of his ship, on some dark night when the stars that have been his hope are overcast, touches the edge of that revolving maelstrom which sucks in many, and spares none, but goes hissing and grinding and groaning round and round forever. But I have no respect for those vain, talkative sceptics, who have never pondered any thing enough to bring gravity to their faces, or bitterness to their disappointment. To those whose ignorance is so profound, that they do not know how their gabbling reveals their incapacity ; who value their so-called scepticism as a means to advertise their smartness of tongue ; and whose erudition consists in having memorized, like a parrot, a list of questions, half of which, by the very nature of things, man can answer only after ages of observation and analysis have been added to the period that he has already lived on the earth, and the other half utterly unanswerable until the student stands in and is as-

sisted by the light of eternity, — to whichever class you belong, friend, I urge you to remember that your scepticism will live after you. Your indifference to religion will take possession of many. Through your words, through your example, according to the extent of it, you will continue to work away at the foundation of men's faith, and undermine the hopes of many. Looking down from that world in which you will then stand, your honest and your dishonest doubts alike swept away, you will see, day after day, and year after year, your destructive work go on. You will hear the young and reckless repeat your old arguments, sneer your old sneers, and laugh your old mocking laugh, at the good and the true. Standing in plain sight of God yourself, you shall hear them deny that there is a God; within view of heaven, its glory discernible as is an illuminated city to one who stands afar off in darkness, seeing its radiance, and almost able to catch the swell of its music, you shall hear your own disciples and imitators ridicule the idea of a celestial life, and jest at the piety of those who live, upheld amid all their troubles, by the thought of heaven. What punishment can be greater than such a destiny, — the destiny of seeing your own conduct imitated, and your own words repeated forever? Change your course, friend. Leave behind you at death a better immortality than that. Live and talk so as to add to the hopes, and not to the fears, the virtues, and not the vices, of the world. Anchor yourself somewhere: or, if you cannot do this, confess to all that you are adrift; that you are wor-

ried and wretched, and not satisfied; and your very despair, in the way of warning, will work good, and not evil, above your grave.

But I must pause: the time to halt has come; and yet my thought has not reached the end of its anticipated march. The subject grows upon me as I ponder it. The voice of it is like the sound of a great sea, when the strong tides, driven by stronger winds, come setting landward, heavy and solemn, and suggestive of a great depth, and of movement far down, and unrevealed save to the eye that sends an intense gaze steadily and directly downward. I am thinking of that influence which you will all leave behind when you die; of that immortality which you cannot take with you at death; of the invisible powers, the unnamed forces, the unsuspected tendencies, that will then represent both you and me. I do not exhort you: I know no words grave or tender enough to express my feelings. I sit you down, I sit down with you, at the base of this solemn and majestic thought, and say, "Friends, let us reflect." How are we living? What are we doing? In what should we change ourselves? With whom shall we stay after death as a source of patience, of strength, of consolation? These are plummet-interrogations; and they sound the very depths of our duty and our attainments.

But, friends, dreadful as is the thought that our evil will live after us, sweet, on the other hand, is the reflection, that whatever is good in us shall likewise never die. The virtues and moralities of our lives

shall live, and live, too, as seeds in the world. Nor will they be as seeds garnered up and locked within the enclosure of one life : for death shall be as a sower to them, and cast them far and wide ; and they shall become, in their growth and blossoming and fruitfulness, the common property of all, and the heritage of the ages. Whatever is sweet and gracious in us shall not perish, but share in the immortality of goodness. It shall move through time like a scented wind, bringing health to the sick, and refreshment to the tired. The best in us shall live, growing better as it lives ; each new embodiment shall give it a fuller expression ; and looking down from heaven, whose joy shall spring in part from the spectacle, we shall see ourselves living in endless usefulness upon the earth. If you and I, my friend, can leave such an immortality behind us at death, then will it be pleasant, and not painful, to die. Our life shall end like a sweet passage in some endless song, whose closing note is lost and swallowed up in the nobler note that follows. We shall go to our death as young birds go to their rest at night, unto whom growth comes amid the darkness, and they wake at morning with stronger wings and brighter plumage.

SABBATH MORNING, NOV. 19, 1871.

SERMON.

TOPIC.—PROSPERITY AS PROMOTIVE OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH.

“THE LINES ARE FALLEN UNTO ME IN PLEASANT PLACES.”—Ps. xvi. 6

THE figure employed in our text is one suggested by the measuring of land. The “lines” spoken of are those which were drawn around a piece of land to distinguish the rights of ownership, and give one legal possession; and the idea of the exclamation on the part of the Psalmist is, that, by the measuring-out or allotment of God’s bounty, great and desirable possessions had been bestowed upon him, and made him rich. The word “places,” also, which gives a certain materialistic significance to the expression, might with equal justice—and, I think, with more—be translated “things:” and the passage would then read, “The lines have fallen to me in pleasant things;” or, “God has bestowed upon me pleasant things:” and the suggestion would then be of a wealth bestowed nobler than material prosperity,—even of all those blessings and mercies and gifts received in life, and by which it is made truly rich and happy. And what I wish to speak to you of this

morning is the tendency or influence of prosperity upon character, and the use we should make of it.

I look upon this passage, friends, as the exclamation of the Psalmist when in one of his best moods. He was not always a good man. He had his sins; and very gross ones they were too. He was not always in a fit condition to write psalms either for himself or his people. But whatever his sinfulness, his duplicity, or his grossness, might occasionally be, God's Spirit was continually working away in his heart. He was a very bad man at times. The atmosphere of his life was often hot and heavy, and full of deadly exhalations that rose from the mirk and mire of his passions, and obscured the sun and heavens, and all bright things; and a vile darkness brooded around him, and was loved by him because it masked his unseemly orgies. More than once did God have to explode his thunders above his head, and burn the fetid air dry with his lightnings, and discharge his judgments down upon him in showers. But after God had thus visited upon him his merciful anger, and put the chastisement of love upon him; after he had humbled his pride, checked his wicked ambition, allowed him to feel the curse of his own grossness, and recalled him, as a shock will often recall a somnambulist, to his senses, — how noble and beautiful he became! and his nature went out in grateful expressions toward God, as a flower-garden, after a thunder-shower, sends its perfumes up into the moist air, loading the low-flying breezes with odors.

Well, as I was saying, David must have been in

some such delightful state when he indited this psalm. Whatever was good, grateful, and hopefully prophetic in his nature must have been in the ascendant. He begins with expressions of devotion, which seem to reach out after, take hold of, and grow warm from contact with, Christ. Some translate the Hebrew term which designates this psalm "golden;" in which case it might be called the "golden psalm," and my text a golden text, and the passage a golden exclamation of praise, of grateful acknowledgment of God's goodness, and of adoring love. And so I do regard it. It is a kind of rapturous, exultant, joyful outbreak, surging up from the Psalmist's heart, breaking into music on his lips, and poured forth into the ear of every age as a bird pours forth her rapturous song, when, perched on the topmost twig of a motionless tree, she sends a prolonged strain out through the quivering air toward the setting sun, until the orchard and the entire neighborhood are filled with notes and quavers and trills and rushes of sweet sounds. He was not in a despondent mood. His thoughts were not heavy nor raven-like. His mind was in a hopeful, grateful, adoring state.

My people, I have spoken of this in the way of analysis more minutely than I should, that I might the more impressively draw forth from it for your profit certain inferences and applications; and my first suggestion is, that we are to regard our daily blessings as the true source of our daily growth spiritually.

God's normal method, if I may so speak, — that

method which most truly expresses him, and which he loves the best, — God's normal method, I say, of developing men, is through benevolence. Mercy and blessing, love and charity, are the prompting impulses of his nature. If he punishes, if he afflicts, it is only that he may check and repress what man has adopted of evil into his system. But the positive, affirmative forces of his administration are the kindly and gracious ones. To the flower he expresses his love in sunshine, in the needed elements of soil, in dew and rain, and all that sweet and mystic chemistry of earth and air best calculated to develop flower-life. The same provision of mercy extends over the animal kingdom, over bird and insect, and the hidden life of the sea. Science has already advanced so far, analysis has already been carried down so deep into details, that the whole earth has become a mirror, in which we see reflected the tireless energies of God, working in swiftest industry to feed and clothe the vast families of his creation. It seems to be a point with him — as one might expect it would be of infinite power, confident in its own resources — to carry every thing forward by easy processes of development, and along easy avenues of progress. It is not natural for God to toil in growth, experience sudden and violent interruptions, and reach perfection through re-formation, and not unchecked expansion. His toil has a restful quality in it: it is only the play and healthful exercise of a capacity so superior to every emergency, that it is never taxed; and what he does he does easily. His power soars to its loftiest flight,

sweeps grandly around its widest circle, with a wing sublimely at rest, whose motion is communicated from invisible forces around it, or generated out of the vital buoyancy of its own structure and plumage.

I do not like that idea of God which conceives of him as best symbolized by an axe and pruning-knife ; as best expressed in the thunder which frightens the timid, and brings destruction to the innocent. I hear his progress through the earth, but not in the sound of sobbing and lamentation ; not in groans of bereavement, and the explosions of pistol-shots, with which men, in the anguish of despair, blow out their brains. Nor do I see him in faces wet with tears or writhing in pain, in homes broken up, clasped hands parted, and the wreck of happy human hopes. I do not say that my heavenly Father's voice may not be heard amid such sounds at times ; I do not say that his sweet face may never be seen amid such surroundings : but I do say that these awful sights and sounds and surroundings do not express him. If he is in these, he is in them by constraint. He deals his judgments out as a good, peace-loving man does a blow, — to vindicate authority or save life, and not because he loves to strike and punish men. His harshness is judicial, not natural. He strikes at the sin, and forgives the sinner at the same moment.

I fear, friends, that I do not bring my thought out clearly ; and I trust to your intelligence, more than to any accuracy in my statement, to catch my conception as it stands shaped in my own mind and soul, rather than as it appears clothed in the poverty

of my verbal expression. But this I say, God is *love*. His nature is amiable — infinitely so — and tender and sympathetic; and the *natural, normal* expression of his character is, like himself, merciful and kindly. Happy himself, he plans for the happiness of his creatures. Not to separate, but to unite; not to disappoint and vex, but to bless and delight; not to distress and impoverish, but to console and enrich men, — is his endeavor. This is the spirit, as I understand it, which lies back of his providences, directing and controlling them; this is the face, which, amid the gathering of all mists, and out of the blackness of every cloud, I see looking in the brightness of love and benevolence upon me.

I am constantly calling your attention, my people, to God's nature, because it is only as you understand his nature that you can rightly interpret his ways. You cannot understand the character of a man's conduct, morally considered, until you understand his motive. Error of judgment is not sin; but maliciousness of thought and purpose is. It is the heart, and not the hand, which colors the deed. If, for instance, you look only at the outward and visible in providence, you cannot account for, you cannot vindicate, it. The good suffer, and the wicked live at ease. What would strengthen and elevate one man or woman is forbidden; the heaven that life might be is denied them, although they seek it purely and with strong crying: while what weakens and destroys another, what is not appreciated, what cannot be appropriated, and which, perhaps, is perverted,

is lavishly bestowed upon him. The lip which quivers for the water dies uncooled by the blessed drop; while the lip which is moist with constant refreshment turns from the proffered cup, which continues to stand undrained and untasted. Reasoning from such data, any imaginable injustice might be put upon God, and the divine Governor be made to appear as a creature of cruel and outrageous impulses, a being to dread and abhor.

You must, therefore, look deeper and farther than into and at the nature of what occurs about us in this world, where every thing is jostled and out of place, in order to see the symmetry and perfectness which inhere in the plans and purposes of God as prompted by his nature. You must search for an opening in the cloud through which to see the clean, clear blue above and beyond. You must separate yourself from the noise and tumult and cursing of a discordant world and life or ever your ears can be filled with the coming-forth of that sweet harmony which issues from God. Then, and only then, do you see how benevolent and placid is his face; then, and only then, do you discover how sweet, and only sweet, is the sound of his natural voice.

Objecting therefore, as I do, to that interpretation of God which presents him as harsh, severe, and unamiable in his mode of government over us, I object with the same emphasis to that conception which links Christian development with the sad and unfortunate in life, with deprivation and bereavement, with repression and disappointment. God might have

made flowers to blossom under a sky dismal with clouds, and unwarmed by any sun ; but, in order to have done it, he must, as a prior condition, have made the flower-nature different, and made floral development to depend on other causes than it now does. And so I do not deny that God might have made our graces to abound and flourish even by such agencies as sorrow and misfortune, and by a treatment severe and forbidding, if not actually cruel ; but I do say, that, in order to do this, he must, as a prior condition, have made human nature other than it to-day is. Constructed as men and women are, I hold that sunshine, the pleasant and cheerful, in cause and effect, bring them forward in goodness more rapidly than the disagreeable and the gloomy. Love operates better on a man than hate. Hope is a healthier stimulant than despair. Success is more succulent with sweet juices than failure. You may take poverty, and its effect upon men and women and children, as an illustration.

There is nothing I dislike more than to hear people with good clothes on their backs, and twenty clerks to come and go at the motion of their finger, eulogize poverty. For one, I hate it, and always have, and always expect to. When a family has to practise an unnatural frugality, it is a curse. It imbitters manhood, and shrivels up womanhood. It begets envy, and discontent with one's lot, and murmurings against God. It wrinkles prematurely the face of beauty with the ugly lines of excessive care ; renders one harsh and querulous in speech, and unamiable in tem-

per. It makes generosity impossible, by the exercise of which the nature is ennobled. It denies one the means of culture, forbids the mind that leisure which it requires for the acquisition of a helpful knowledge, and chains a man down until life has no nobler object than to obtain food wherewith to supply his lower and daily-recurring wants. Thus every day consumes the entire result of its own toil, and leaves no surplus for the future. The physical is thus elevated until it entirely overtops in importance and necessity the intellectual and spiritual, and man becomes simply a rational animal. To my mind, poverty is something to hate and fly from. It dwarfs the mind, oppresses the soul, imbitters the heart, and stints the growth and usefulness of man. I know that Christ bore it; but he bore it as he did all the other wretched conditions and surroundings of mortal life, — to show that it could be borne, and because it behoved the Captain of our salvation to be made perfect through suffering. The saddest thing he ever said, as I think, and that which sounded out of a dejection and a sense of debasement deeper than are betrayed in any other passage, was his exclamation touching his poverty. “The birds of the air,” he said, “have nests, and the foxes have holes; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” That was bitter indeed; and it needed all his divine meekness and patience to endure it uncomplainingly. There is a vast deal of affectation, and more of ignorance, in the way people speak of this thing, and others of like character. They are neither honest nor intelligent in their analysis of the

food which nourishes their best growth. When I hear a man talk about poverty being a blessing to him, I think that he doesn't know what poverty is, or else that he misused his wealth when he was rich. When a person tells me that a fit of sickness has been his salvation, I know that he must have lived very wickedly when he was well. Because, here and there, you find a man who must be about killed before he will become good, it does not prove that life is not desirable, and the right time, as the old hymn says, to serve the Lord. I do not say that great wealth is desirable, any more than that the earth would be made more productive if it were inundated with a flood: but I do say that a moderate amount of rain is better for a farmer than a prolonged drought; and so a fair share of the good things of life is better, immeasurably better, for the development of amiable graces in the soul and temper, than a pinching and oppressive deprivation. I believe, that, under the Christian dispensation, wealth has become a blessing; and the more a man has, so long as God's Spirit dwells in his heart, the better he will become. If I could have my way, —and I say it soberly, and with a great wish in my heart for God's glory and your eternal good, —I would make every poor man in my congregation rich. I would put comfort, and appliances of culture (including a piano), into every tenement-house in this city. I would take worry from the poor man's mind, and anxiety about the temporal support of herself and orphan-children from the mother's heart. I would give every beneficiary on our charity a home and books, a well-

furnished table and a warm bed, and make the divine exercise of benevolence possible to every one. I believe that a great many people would be much better than they are if they were not so poor. Their poverty cramps them and dwarfs them, and puts a great temptation upon them to lie and steal and deceive; hardens them, makes them reckless, and sends them to the bottle in the hope of finding in unconsciousness a refuge from their troubles and a surcease of sorrow. I know that God pities all such, and forgives many. He sees the strong man's despair, and the widow's tears; and his ears are forever open to the moans of those children who moan in their sleep because they are hungry. And when the great and glad day for which the world has waited so long has at last come, and men stand in the uprightness of that liberty which all shall enjoy, one curse from which man shall be delivered will be the curse of poverty; and there shall not be a beggar on the face of the earth, or a single soul in need of any thing which is calculated to develop his faculties, or minister to his happiness.

I am willing to bring this to the test of experience. For one, I can bear witness, that while adversity has toughened me, and added to the power of simple endurance, and brought a kind of grim patience to me, while it has made me more set and determined and imperious, it has not, so far as I can ascertain, made me amiable or virtuous or happy. If any thing in me has flowered out sweetly, if any moral fragrance has been imparted to me, if my labors have ever

been lightened by the incoming of cheerfulness, it has not been effected through trouble and sickness and financial embarrassment. I can truly say, that I have never been tortured into goodness. Not by the blustering of March winds, or the descent of sharp-cutting hail, or the icing of pitiless frost, have the few flowers which may have blossomed in the garden of my life been brought forward; but these have grown, and passed from the germinal to the floral state, in those seasons, when above and around me, like a warm atmosphere, brooded the summer-like experiences of God's love. To change the figure, I have always sailed the fastest, and steered the straightest, when, in the heavens ahead of me, God hung out some great star; when, in brief, I could say, and was compelled to say, because of the very abundance of my blessings, "The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places."

I feel, friends, that God intends this to be so. This is the true order of growth, because it comes through the right improvement, and not the perversion, the use, and not the abuse, of his blessings. If you have health, then you should be better because of your health; if beauty, then you should be nobler because of your beauty; if riches, then your riches should assist your soul in its divine growth. Any other philosophy than this reverses the order of God's government, and converts favorable into unfavorable conditions of life. Any other analysis compels us to mistrust his wisdom, and impeach his benevolence; for the favorable in nature and grace

certainly has precedent of the unfavorable. Light performs more ministries to the vegetable kingdom than darkness; day ripens more seed than night. Adam was originally located in Eden, and was banished only when it was shown that he did not appreciate the blessing.

In addition to this primal law in his economy, God is continually sending extraordinary mercies to us, and stirring men by extraordinary stimulants. He enriches life by those benefactions which come in the way of surprises, and are notably of him because so potential for good. Life, as you all know, is not measured by time, but by events and experiences. Now and then a great event occurs, so notable and impressive, that it possesses the memory and imagination, and all our after-actions are dated from it. Some death, some birth, some calamity, some mighty deliverance from danger, — these furnish divisions for our calendar, and mark the epochs of our lives. Sometimes a great and divine love, being conceived of God, is born within one, so gracious, so superior, that it makes all one's nature seem only as the manger in which it lies; while every reverent faculty, guided by the star of its faith, brings to it myrrh and frankincense, and it becomes to the man his savior. More than one man has been saved in this way, — saved from despondency, from temptation, from sin. Every soul must have some divine impulse in it, or it will never move on in the divine life. Every pilot must have some landmark, some beacon, some star, to steer by, or his hand will let go the wheel in doubt and

sheer despair. And when such an experience is granted one ; when the best in him is brought out by contact with something better than itself ; when connection with purity elicits purity, and a hope holier than he ever had known springs up within him, and takes a celestial form, and bends over him with a face like a star, — how it enriches, how it glorifies him ! Forces in his nature, hitherto unknown, are felt, as the sap in spring-time is felt in the tree ; and his faculties leaf out, and all his graces, which had existed only as possibilities, bud and blossom, and become actual. His capacities are multiplied : what was dormant is aroused to action ; and the dead sea-level of life breaks into ripples under the heavenly impulse, and his energies go voyaging forth in the swift traffic of benevolence like ships with flowing sails. What a change has come over the man ! He labors now like birds, who sing as they toil at their nest-building. Duty becomes joy, and service tuneful ; self-denial is a pleasure, and spending a gain.

Surely, friends, you understand what I mean. You have had such seasons ; you have had such blessings. You know I am speaking of causes which have wrought the noblest and sweetest results of your lives ; of influences that have made you happy as mothers and fathers, as husbands and wives, as brothers and sisters and lovers ; of experiences which were a revelation in themselves, and without which you would never have known the length and breadth, the height and depth, either of God's love or of your own nature. These deep and holy feelings are

revelations, sweetly revealing sweet things in us. Without them we should never have known how much we could suffer or enjoy. They put a new and larger definition to happiness; enlarge the circumference of our being, until we are astonished at how much we can include and appropriate; and we walk about and think and dream in a kind of bewilderment, and are strangers unto our old self. We wonder how we could have been so selfish, so content with the old state of things. The sights and sounds and experiences that filled us formerly are so meagre now! We had lived on husks, without knowing it, until we had a taste of the divine bread; but now we fare and feel as the children of kings, whose natures and condition are royal. Have you never seen a man lifted suddenly out of selfishness, and made generous, by the incoming of such a power to his soul? Have you never seen rudeness teach itself the mannerisms of courtesy? Have you not seen the naturally indolent made industrious, the sluggish active, the rough become gentle, and the sceptical taking kindly and reverently to the habits of devotion, under the stimulant of such causes? Why, friends, it is that man may have light by which to walk that God has set the sun in the heavens by day, and the moon and stars at night. It is that grasses may grow, and trees thrive, and flowers blossom, and every seed germinate, that he has filled the skies with warmth, the clouds with rain, and the air with refreshing agitations. This is their mission. In all these God's benevolence is heard, and heard, too, in melody

throughout the world. And so it is in the case of his ministrations to the moral and spiritual development of man. He elicits growth by attractions too sweet to be resisted. He centres upon us powers as potent as is the solar beam to the uplifted flower: we cannot droop; we cannot remain pent; our faculties will lift themselves, and unfold in all their maturing loveliness, in the face of those irresistible and gracious forces streaming downward upon them from him.

A few words, now, in the way of direct application. And, in the first place, let us who have been favored in the circumstances of our life call up in remembrance, and make mention before the Lord, all his benefits to us. You have memories: exercise them, a moment, in the way of reminiscence. Many of you who are before me are advanced in years. It is a long road you have travelled, friend, since you came to this city as a boy. There have been steep places in it, and sudden turns. Some of you are higher in wealth and reputation than you ever expected then to stand. You were ambitious; but you have gained more than you had hope or knowledge to anticipate. You never expected to be as rich, or as honored, or as well known, as you are. God has done great things for you. He has co-operated with you in his providence; he has delivered you in sickness, and more than once warded from you a sudden and violent death: though a thousand fell at your right hand, and ten thousand at your left, yet you have not been moved. And you stand before us to-day, your family

and property grouped around you, a monument of God's preserving and fostering care. How has all this affected you? how does it affect you to-day? Has wealth made you grasping? Has prominence made you vain? Has success quickened your gratitude, and rendered you child-like before Him who has given you all you have, and made you all you are? Are you making to-day a right use of your prosperity? Has your obedience been that of love, or that of fear? Have you been as children who need only to know the parent's wish, or as children who care nothing for the parent's wish unless it is sustained and made potential with a threat?

Again: I ask you to reflect upon and call over in mind the manifold mercies of God to you and yours. Go over the long and glorious list. Think of him more as the source of your present blessings than as the source of future penalty. To some, I fear, God is ever and only a judge: they never think of him in any other capacity. They never see him save as they telescope him through the distorting lenses of guilt and fear. Reform yourself, friend, and let your conception of him be a more worthy and just one. He is not only a judge: he is your father; you are his child. Look up, then, into his face; and when you see its kindness, its beaming benevolence, its outshining and yearning love, smiles will come, or tears will start. The thought of God's kindness quickens more penitence than the fear of his wrath. Terror makes runaways; but confidence brings the wanderer home.

Never will I perpetuate a theology of gloom. If the whirlwind and flame in the olden time, when men's minds were darkened and men's habits gross, could not reveal God, how much less may they now ! If the warm rains and the gentle dews and bright sun cannot make the garden fragrant, and load the vines with purple fruitfulness, then, sure, the thunder cannot do it. I know that thunder is, at intervals, a beneficence. Concussions and atmospheric explosions serve their purpose in the economy of nature. Flame and shock are needed. But these, I also know, and so do you, are exceptional methods, — the resorts and expedients, and not the usual processes through which the God of nature ministers to his own. If I were telling you of some dearly-loved friend, some noble and generous man or perfect woman, I should not describe how he looked in some moment of anger, when he found himself imposed upon, and his features were set as iron, and his eyes blazed with a light grand, but terrible. Although his anger was legitimate, and his wrath fully justified by the emergency, still I should not sketch him as he stood and looked at such a time ; for it would give you only one phase of his nature, and the phase, too, least seen and needed. It would not be fair to him ; for it would not adequately describe him. I should tell you rather of his ordinary appearance when unruffled ; of his manner of speech and action day by day. I should take you into his domestic life, and show you how patient and courteous he was ; into his public life, and describe his integrity and zeal ;

into the centre of his friendships, and make you see him in his loves: in short, I should picture him to you as I knew him to be in the ordinary expression of his nature, and not as he might appear in the sudden and rare emergencies of his career, and so make you understand and love him. And so I would act also in my efforts to make people understand God. If I can only make them understand and realize what my heavenly Father is in himself naturally, I shall feel that my duty has been done, and the strongest possible pressure put upon them as rational beings to love and serve him.

“The lines are fallen unto *us* in pleasant places.” No, not *fallen*: our Father’s hand has *drawn* them so. Love carried the cord, and drove the stakes, which allotted to us our fortunes, and made us, even in the supply of our physical comforts, like happy kine, which lie down, filled and restful, amid the clover-heads and the rich odors of the growing grasses, in the fat meadow-land. But more generous yet has been the divine allotment to us in respect to our minds and souls; for he has invited us to his own table, and, seated with his Son, we have fed like children of God. Oh the love this Being should have from us! Our gratitude should go up before him ceaselessly, as the flame of some strange incense-fire, that generates from the air around it, in burning, the force that feeds its constant fervor.

And now, as those who are sensible of God’s benefits; who hold their wealth and love and friendships, and all dear things, as given of him; as those

who adore him for the loveliness of his nature, and the benevolence of his ways, — we bow our hearts in reverence ; and, as the simple yet perfect expression of our praise, we say, “ Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.”

SABBATH MORNING, NOV. 26, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

“AND TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST, WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE.”—
Ephes. iii. 19.

THE apostle is striving to impress the Church at Ephesus with the universal application of the atonement as manifested in the salvation of the Gentiles. He beseeches God to enlarge their faith and charity, and to give them, as the crowning act of favor, the grace to know and understand the wonderful love of our Lord Jesus Christ. My subject, as suggested by the passage, is, “Knowledge of Christ.” I have a strong desire that some in this audience may see Christ to-day as they have never seen him; that they may learn to know him in all his gracious offices in their behalf, in all his tenderness of sympathy, in all the height and depth of his amazing love.

But, friends, a shadow comes over the landscape of my hope, even as I begin to speak. I fear that some of you here do not even remotely know Christ. If I speak my heart out to you, you will not understand me. You will think I am only preaching, only making

a sermon, if I should speak of feelings you never felt, of hopes you never had, of a lore you never learned. You are in a Christian church without any Christian experience. I am to talk of a Saviour to people that are not saved. Am I unfortunate in my audience, or you unfortunate in your condition? You are not Christians; and, in saying this, had you only eyes to see, you would behold at what a disadvantage you stand. You are not Christians; which means that you live as those who lived before the star shone in the east. You are nineteen hundred years in the rear of the world's present position.

But, Christian friends, not only do some not know Christ in their experiences, in their personal motives and aims, in their longing and hope, not only are many all around us Christless in their individual experiences and position, but, strange to say, men there are who profess to be religious teachers, prophets, and interpreters of Christianity, who know nothing of Christ in their religion. I do not mean to be understood as saying that they have never heard of Christ; for his fame has gone out through all the earth, and entered into every ear. They do, indeed, have knowledge of him. They know him as the student knows Plato and Socrates, as the military cadet knows Cæsar and Napoleon, as the humane reformer knows Howard and Wilberforce. They know him as a good and gracious man; as a wise teacher of ethics; as a foe of formalism and hypocrisy; as one who loved truth more than life, and ennobled death, and made his name immortal by dying for it. But, friends, what

meagre, what cold, what heartless knowledge is this of the Son of God! Is Calvary to mean no more to my soul than the prison in which envy poisoned Socrates? Is the cross on which the Saviour expired to be to the sinful of the world no more than the stake of common martyrdom? Is the name of Jesus to have no deeper significance to human ears than that attached to one of a thousand names treasured by human speech? Is Christ to be regarded no more than one of a dozen remarkable teachers of a remote age? Why, what is a *Christless Christianity* worth? What salvation is this without any Saviour in it? What is this limp, this unblazoned rag, with no name, no letter of light, on all its surface, no golden fringe of glorious tradition, no stout staff of historic evidence from which to wave? Do men think that New England, that the youth of this generation, will turn from the banner of their fathers, will cast away the glorious symbol of their glory and power, and choose so tame, so spiritless, so cold an affair as free religion, or any religion which has not the warmth of a human and the power of the divine nature beating in it? I tell them, Nay. I am surprised that any should feel the least movement of alarm at such exhibitions of ignorance of the power of faith and the unquenchable longings of the human soul. Such a religion has no vitality in it. Such preachers have no gospel to preach, no Bible to expound, no sin to convict, no faith to declare; for, apart from Christ as a Saviour, there is no gospel, no New Testament, no pulpit, no church. When the Church is

only a lecture-hall, the pulpit only a lyceum-platform, the New Testament only a book of queer assertions and blunders, Jesus only a man, what basis have you for any powerful religious movement? None at all. Such a religion is like a ship whose parts are glued together. The moment you launch it, the instant she touches the waters of popular hopes and longings, the cement of speculation and theory melts, and the stately fabric dissolves. What looked so grand and philosophic in Horticultural Hall goes to pieces in North Street. What dreary work it must be to preach, and yet have no gospel to preach! — to have the crowds thronging to you, the halt, the blind, the leprous, all crying, “Who will open my eyes?” “Who will heal this withered limb?” “Who can cure me of this loathsome disease?” and yet know of no physician to whom to direct them! A teacher of Christianity not know Christ! a pulpit ignoring the New Testament! a person claiming to be inspired to preach, who makes a sermon one long laugh at inspiration! Truly, friends, of all novelties I have seen in an age which seeks to revive the ancient juggleries, this is the strangest. Poor, pitiful substitute indeed is this for the faith, the hope, the joy, the growth in holiness, which the gospel gives. He who can tell this age of no better heaven than man’s mind can conceive, and man’s virtue claim, has no place among the religious forces of the day.

No: I take no alarm, I borrow no trouble, from such an effort. There is not religious force enough in a

Christless religion to propel it twenty years. There is no converting power in such a religion. It is unreal, shadowy. It does not take hold of the popular heart. It puts no grasp of power upon men's consciences. Its fingers, I admit, may be delicately shaped, and beautifully tinted: but they are fingers of wax, and not of flesh and blood; there are no muscles in them. The good abhor such a religion as impious; and the wicked know, that, if they ever should make an effort to be good, it must be from some higher, holier, mightier motive than it yields. I do not ask you if you know Christ as I would inquire whether you are cognizant of some delightful piece of knowledge. Faith in a Saviour, a Helper, a Friend, is not a mere matter of preference: it is a matter of necessity. The conditions of your daily lives are such, your exposure to calamity is such, your temptations are such, your sins are such, that you need the presence of Him who "taketh away the sins of the world." Your wants are real, deeply felt: you need a real and deeply-felt supply. Your griefs are real. Your lives are not like gardens in the tropics, where the blossom and the fragrance fail not; where the birds are all gayly feathered, and their flight like the flash of gold through the air: your lives are like gardens at the north, where winters succeed summers in swift succession; upon which the frost falls, and withers every thing pleasant; into which the biting wind comes, and searches out every leaf of beauty, every trace of fragrance, to blow them all away; and your garden is left unto you desolate. The

walks are frozen, the borders withered, the trellises leafless, and stand like skeletons which once were clothed upon with life and loveliness. How often have such seasons come to you! The world did not know it; no one knew it but God and your own soul: but more than once since you were born have you stood empty-handed and alone on the earth; when you faced adversity, as a woman thinly clad, homeless and friendless, faces, with features from which all the warm blood has been driven, the cold winds of the north; when you stood in your houses, which were like to nothing so much as a cage in which the favorite bird lies dead; for death had come to the chamber, sudden and swift, and the voice that was sweeter than the voice of birds was hushed forever, and your heart was like to one around whom all the blackness and horror of darkness were gathered; or when hell concentrated all its pressures upon your soul, determined to have it, and your virtue tottered and swayed as a building heaved upon by an earthquake, and every hope was shaken in its place, and honesty and honor and fidelity were upon the point of coming down in one huge wreck. Such seasons, I say, have come to you, and you have called for help as a man who is being murdered at night shouts for a watchman: and God heard your cry, and answered your prayers; and out of the darkness a voice sounded, "Let there be light," and light was; and to the earthquake he said, "Move no more," and the earth became steady beneath you, and your virtue, your honesty, your honor, your fidelity, stood. Then and there, my

brother, you knew Christ ; knew him as Peter knew him when he was lifted from the waves ; as the penitent thief knew him on the cross ; as Lazarus knew him when the voice of his Lord and Friend startled him from the slumber of death, and, clothed only in the garments of the grave, he came forth from his sepulchre.

You see therefore, friends, that to know Christ with the head, to know him only as a man who once existed, but who died and passed away as all mere men must, is not to know him as Paul prayed that the Ephesians might know him. You must know him in your experiences of joy and grief, in your trials and heartaches, in the disappointment of your expectation, the failure of your plans, the wreck of your hopes, in sickness and sorrow and death, if you are to know him as he deserves to be known, as he longs to be known.

The path which leads one to a knowledge of Christ is the same as leads one to the knowledge of any friend.

What is it to know a man ? Is it to know his name, where he lives, what his business is ? Do you know a man when you know only this ? Why, no, you say : that is not to know a man. To know a man, you must know what his character is ; what motives, whether honest or dishonest, actuate him. I remember being invited to see a portrait once. It was curiously arranged. There was a glass over it, whose reflecting power had been partially taken away. It was a whim of the painter to have it so

exhibited. When you entered the room, and took position before it, you saw nothing but a dull-looking mirror, in the centre of which the eye could barely discern the outlines of a human face; or rather, so dim was it, it seemed only a suggestion of a face. But, as you gazed, you became gradually conscious that a change was taking place. The outlines grew stronger, more clearly marked; the mouth, nose, and eyes became dimly visible. A moment more, and a face was indeed to be seen, but lacking color and expression. The features did not speak. There was no intelligence in the eye. But in an instant a soft tint began to spread over it; the cold cheek warmed into the color of perfect cleanliness and health; the eye was lighted up; the soft golden hair seemed alive with the stirrings of wind; the lips stood apart, as if in the act of sweet utterance; and then you knew that a face of wonderful perfection as a work of art was before you.

Well, so it is with our knowledge of men. We do not see them at a glance; they do not reflect what they really are at once: we do not know them at first; we see only the outlines of the man. Only as we watch him in his motives and acts, only as time permits his real character to become visible, his soul in all its movements, in every feature of its life, every shade of its color, to beam out upon us, do we know a man. No one knows who his friends are until it costs something to be his friend. When you have to stand up and defend a man in the face of many; when you have to back him up against

odds; when you have to set your faith in his integrity over against other men's suspicions; when you have to say to falsehood in the majority, "You are a liar!"—then, and not till then, does the man really know you as his friend.

I knew a man two years ago who lost his property. He was burnt clean out, as we say. He had been a good man. He was not a saint; he was not one of your "perfection Christians;" he was simply a good man with faults: but he was burnt out, I say, and stood, at fifty, with not five hundred dollars in the world. His neighbors and friends put their heads together; and they not only put their heads together, they put their hearts and pockets together. They said, "Neighbor A—— has been unfortunate: let us help him out. He has been a good citizen; he has helped to build up the place: let us take hold and give him a lift, and start him again." They did. They appointed a committee (you never knew a dozen New-England men get together who didn't appoint a committee). They took up a collection: one man put down fifty dollars, another one hundred, one five hundred, one ten dollars,—each according to his ability; and they raised enough to start him in business again. Then they sent two of their number up to his house with the money. They found him in his library, casting up accounts. They knew, and he knew, that, when he was done, he would find that he was not worth a dollar in the world. Not one of those men could speak a word. They laid the bundle of bank-bills down on his desk, and went

away without saying a syllable. And the man said to a friend the next morning, while his voice choked, and great tears welled up into his eyes, "Sir, I never knew that I had such friends on the earth. I am not worthy of such love."

And it is just so with Christ, my people. You who know him only by name; who know him only as a being who once lived on the earth, but is now gone from it; you who know him only in the outline of his features, and not in the glorious radiance of his countenance when lifted in light upon you; you who do not know him in your motives, in your trials, in all the sweet and bitter experiences of your souls, — you do not know Christ. Friends, you are living in a Christian age and land without knowing your Saviour. The knowledge into which angels desire to look, and are not able, solicits your attention, and you scarcely give it a thought! With the message of salvation in your ears, with the evidences of redeeming love in personal testimony before your eyes, you are of those, who, having ears hear not, and having eyes see not, the things that concern their salvation. I marvel that natures which respond so sensitively to the impulse of gratitude and duty in the comparatively low things of this life give no response to those solicitations through which God seeks to influence your immortal destiny.

Have you ever, in some quiet hour, some leisure moment, with no duty on your hands, with nothing to intrude on your pleasant musing, found yourself running over the list of your friends, from the dear

mother that gave you life, clean down to the last acquaintance you made, analyzing their characters, and singling out the predominating characteristic of each? I have, often. Of one man I have said, "He is the most honorable, high-toned man I ever met." Of another, the man with the most lively sense of justice, "He would not knowingly wrong a living being: if he were to die, and I were to symbolize his character and life on marble, I would etch on his tombstone nothing but a pair of balances in exact, equal poise; for that would tell the gazer what sort of a man he was." Of another I would find generosity the dominant trait; of another, benevolence. And so I have gone on making a schedule, as it were, of their virtues. Now, you may take any of these, and you say with me, that no one could really know them until they discovered the ruling impulse, the regnant disposition which held the sceptre, and ruled all the outgoings of their lives. You must find the key to the cabinet before you can look upon the jewels within. Until you have this perception of the central impulse of a person's life, you do not know the person. And so it is precisely touching our knowledge of Christ. You must put yourself at the right point to behold a picture or a landscape; and you must put yourself in the right position toward the Saviour or ever you can know the Saviour. Now, a great many Christians, I fear, do not know Christ as they might know him, because they do not look at him from the right point of view. They do not realize what the great purpose of his life toward them is. They do not know how strong he is, be-

cause they never lean on him ; nor how sympathetic, for they never tell him their troubles ; nor how forgiving, for they never heartily trust his mercy. Now, if I could only know what conception you have of Christ, if I only knew how your imagination pictures him, what sort of a being in his feelings toward you you deem him to be, I should be able to say whether or no you knew him as you ought to know him, as he longs to be known by every human heart. Take this matter of going to him in prayer. I fear a great many Christians go to God as to one offended at them ; as one averse to them ; as one from whom forgiveness, if it comes at all, is extorted by much entreaty ; as one whose sympathies are to be aroused by cries and tears, the spectacle of agony and prostration. But, friends, the Bible does not present God in any such light as that. Take the parable of the prodigal son, — a parable spoken expressly to enlighten us as to God's feelings toward us, — and what do we see ? Is this miserable beggar who has beggared himself ; this wretch and wreck of humanity, who has more sins at his back than days of life ; who has done what not one man in a thousand does ; who has sounded the depths of Eastern vice, and dragged himself through the whole slough of it ; whose sins have been open, persistent, outrageous, — is this enormity of ingratitude, this marvel of sinfulness, to be received when he drags the poor remnant of his manhood back to his old home ? If there was ever a being from whom God might in anger avert his face ; if ever he might delay the outgoing of his mercy ; if ever hesitate in his

mind, in doubt where the line between justice and mercy might be drawn, — surely it was in the case of this ruined vagabond. The prodigal felt this himself. He felt that there was no hope for him, no chance of restoration. His expectation, his dream, was, not that his father would ever receive him back to his love: his ambition was, to be only one among his servants, — a poor unnoticed, unloved hireling. But, friends, you know the story. *Do you believe it?* Do you believe that God does leave his house? does run to meet him? does actually put his arms around the poor sinner's neck? Do the tears of a divine compassion, the tears of a great and holy joy, fall on the face of a poor wretch *before he has even had time to say a word?* When you have sinned, when your conscience condemns you, when you know and feel that you have sinned against Heaven and in his sight, and, falling on your knees, you go to God in prayer, do you begin to pray as if you had a great task of persuasion to perform? as if you must make a picture of wretchedness of yourself to waken God's pity? as if he had a memory only for your offences, and pity had set his heart against you, and you must propitiate him, and by much entreaty prevail upon him to restore you to your former rank and standing in his favor? Is that your view of God? Is that the picture your imagination paints? Well, it is not mine. May the Spirit of God be praised forever by my lips, that he has made me able to see God in another light, — even as Jesus himself saw him when he described him to us in the parable of the prodigal son! Ah, friends! I

fear you never will know of the love of God in Christ Jesus, because you will not *believe*. You continue to make God like to yourselves ; to think that he can forgive only as you forgive, or love only as you love. His love is so great, that it is incredible to you. You feel that there must be a mistake about it. You fear of making forgiveness too easy. You cannot believe that God loves like *that*. But, friends, he does love like *that* ; for the Gospels say that he does. He loves every one of you like that, whether you believe it or not. He loves every poor, sinful man like that. Do not think this love too great : no less love could have given birth to the atonement. It was because God *so* loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that those who believed in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

And now, friends, I say, if there is a man here who wishes to be taken into God's favor to-day ; who is tired of his sins ; whose judgment says, as he looks at his past course of life, " This thing must stop ; I will eat no longer with swine ; I will arise, and go to my Father's house," — I tell you, my friends, the God of mercy has gone out to meet that soul ; and, if his arms were ever around any man's neck, they are around that man's neck at this moment. I believe in original sin ; I believe in depravity : but, beyond all these things, I believe in God's love for man. Perish all other articles ; yet, keeping this, my creed shall be abundant. This faith, full-orbed, resplendent, with healing on its beams, shall ride the heaven of my hope. No night shall darken while it sails above me, no clouds en-

dure the fervency of its career. It shall roll on, the cause and centre of radiations that penetrate through the entire atmosphere of my existence. My life shall be its orbit. It shall revolve forever around the soul that it illuminates, and shine the brightest when about to pass with me from this into another realm. O friends! if our faith in God's love for us in Jesus was like to what some men's faith is in the doctrine of election or depravity or inability, the divine nature would be to us what the mother's bosom is to the babe,—the source of all our nourishment, the warm pillow of our peaceful sleep.

I do not think of Jesus as I used to think of him. My views of him have changed, nay, are changing, with the changes of growth. Once, touching his divine nature, he was a mystery. The union of the divine with the human, the infinite with the finite, quickened thought indeed, started speculation, winged the imagination, until it flew so far that it became bewildered, and was lost amid the mazes and circles of its own flight; and, unable to support itself in the thin atmosphere to which it mounted, it fell at last tumbling to the earth, no better for its effort. Even as a man I did not understand him: he was as one not to be understood. I admired him, but did not love him. I could not bring him down to my level. I was a peasant, he a king. Look at him as I might, he was my God, and not my brother. He was not one half so much my friend as many of you are to-day,—one who would watch over me if I were sick, counsel with me when I am perplexed, and support me in all

the ups and downs of life. And, when I read that I was heir and joint-heir with him of heavenly glory, the words did not take hold of me : I do not think that I believed them. But, my friends, all this is changed ; at least, it is changing. I am not perfect in faith yet, but more trustful than I once was. I know that I am not perfect in love yet ; but, nevertheless, fear has been cast out of me. I have not attained as yet, I have not reached, the city ; but I feel that my feet are in the road, and that I am moving on to a full, clear, sweet knowledge of God's love in Christ. The city is hidden yet ; but ahead of me, and on the other side of the hill that I am climbing, on the crest of which my grave lies (I do not like to hear people talk of going *down* to their graves : Christians do not go *down*, they go *up*, to their graves), — on the other side of the hill I am climbing, on the crest of which my grave lies, I say, I hear the bells of the city ringing : for heaven has its triumphs continually ; its victories never cease, and its bells are never silent. And the bells keep on ringing : their melody, swelling in clearness and volume as I advance, sounds forever in my ears. They ring in sympathy. When I weep, they swing more slowly ; not like our funeral-bells, but as if God had hushed them to a softer tone. When I laugh, they ring a livelier movement. *It seems as if my own brother's hand governed the chimes.* And so he does, good friends, — even Christ the Lord, who seems no longer as a King, as Lord, as Master, but as my own dear, elder brother.

My friends, I have preached this sermon to you because I believed that it expressed the prevailing spirit of New-England theology as it is being preached in her churches to-day. The old warfares are past: the noise of their contentions is hushed. The bitter speech, the logic that ignored charity, the spirit that begat persecution, the mistaken zeal that banished the Baptist and scourged the Quaker, denunciation and anathema,—these no longer find expression from her pulpits. The fighters sleep, and the bitterness that entered into those contests between brethren is covered by the grass that grows on graves. Nevermore may such battle be joined! Let the grave, I say, have its triumph. Christianity will not be the loser. Peace will never be born out of contention. The creed of the evangelical churches is better than the practice of evangelical Christians. Our heads are nearer the truth than our hearts; we are better theologians than we are disciples. What, then, is the great need of the hour? Is it more knowledge? No. “Who by searching can find out God?” Do we need in our churches more forms, more definitions, more creeds? No, again. The harp has its full allotment of strings. It is perfect; and yet we wait in vain for the music. It is dumb: what it needs is the living player,—a white hand to sweep it, and fingers of skill to move over the strings. So it is with us. Our knowledge is ample. We apprehend fully the way of salvation. What we need is the Spirit of God in our hearts; the divine touch

that shall thrill us, and wake every faculty to melodious action. We need a stronger, deeper, warmer love for man as a lost sinner, — a love which shall disquiet us by day, haunt us by night, and give us no rest until we have saved some one.

Oh that such a love might come to us in perfect measure to-day ; and not alone to us, but also unto all the churches ; yea, and unto all mankind !

And now, my people, how are we to best communicate this sympathetic, love-fostering heart-knowledge of Christ to the world ? How can we interpret the Saviour, not intellectually, but emotionally, to men ? They do not understand this matter of religion in its spiritual and spiritualizing characteristics. They associate it — perhaps we have taught them to do so — with certain forms of words, with deductions of men's intellect, and of men, too, who lived centuries back, with a certain machinery of administration distasteful to them, and a mannerism of expression, which, it must be admitted, is not always above the censure of a just criticism : and the result is, they look upon religion as something to accept or reject just as they please ; whereas the religion of the New Testament can no more be rejected by a person who understands its spiritual adaptations than a loaf of sweet bread can be rejected by a man pressed with hunger. It is adapted to him. It exactly meets his wants. It is just what he needs. And so it is with religion, friends. There is not a man or woman of all you who

are here — I care not how grave or gay, how rich or poor, you may be — that does not need those motives and impulses, those hopes and incitements, that are found only in the practice of the Christian religion.

How to make men understand and feel this is the great question for the Church to solve. This is the problem that stands at the foot of every pulpit, looking steadily and wistfully up into the preacher's face. It stands at every pew-door, with its hand on the clasp, saying, "Let me in!" It stands knocking at the door of every Christian heart, saying, "Open, that the world may see what a palace of hope there is within!"

For one, I am growing to feel, that, if we would make men trust Christ, we must trust him more ourselves. Our love, our hope, our joy, our faith, must be more perceptible to men or ever they will search for the cause. And who ever began to search for the cause of Christian hopefulness, and did not finally embrace it? Hence it is, that in my walk and conversation as a private man, and in my utterances as a public teacher, I strive to make the healthy and happy and vigorous in religion seen. I wish that the despondent and tempted and fallen of my age* may see how buoyant and hopeful and blessed Christianity is. The beacon is not for me alone; it shines for every soul that sails the sea I sail, — for every tossed and buffeted one, and for all who are heaved upon violently: and never are its beams so bright, never are they shot forth so far, as when the sky is

overcast, and the shore whitest with peril. When the heavens are black, the sea white, and the shore one voice of thunder, then it is that religion stands like some granite shaft that is built on an immovable rock, and whose crest is luminous with a steady and an inextinguishable light ; then it is that the Saviour becomes a Saviour indeed, and we know that love which passeth knowledge.

SABBATH MORNING, DEC. 3, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—DIVINE GOVERNMENT:

“THY THRONE IS ESTABLISHED OF OLD.”—Ps. xciii. 2.

A THRONE is the symbol of government: it is the expression of authority, and the seat of power. When the Psalmist declares of God that “his throne is established of old,” it is the same as if he had said, that God, from all time, is the head of a government; has power, dominion, and sovereignty. I am to speak to-day of this subject, — the subject of divine government; of its necessity, use, and modes of manifestation.

The world is very willing to forget that God is a Governor; that he has a throne, exercises authority, and executes laws. There is much said, even in certain pulpits, calculated to confuse the public mind touching the character of this government. God is misrepresented, and made to appear harsh and unlovely, and his authority, when exercised, as the exhibition of malevolent affection; and not a little capital is made, by those who oppose evangelical religion, by this process.

But observe how palpable is the error in such views of divine government. Why, what is the greatest as it is the dearest-bought boon of our race? What is that to obtain which people most willingly lavish their treasure, and shed their blood? What is that most precious result of the world's best growth, whose presence includes all other blessings, whose absence is the synonyme of every disorder and curse? Is it not good government? Is it not for this that all the people of the world who are sufficiently enlightened to appreciate what is desirable are to-day striving? For this one result the race for these centuries have been struggling. For this the statesman plans, the publicist writes, the poet sings, and the patriot dies. Ask those three hundred thousand graves which dot our land; lower your lips to the mounds beneath which the nation's heroes slain in battle sleep, and ask the sacred dust beneath the cause and reason of their death; and out of the silence of those graves, and from the lips of the dumb, will come this answer: "We died that liberty might not perish, or good government be lost to this continent." What does government mean? It means stability; it means progress in every good order of growth; it means material prosperity; it means peace. Like that marvellous tree of the tropics, its leaves clothe, its fruit feeds, and under its shadows the nations of the earth repose. If you call for further evidence, I point to your schoolhouses and churches, — blessings unknown to anarchy. Enumerate the number and magnificence of your cities, your fields that feed the

world, and your ships that whiten the sea with your sails. What has advertised America throughout the globe? What has sent your fame to every tribe of the desert, and lifted your name before the eyes of the world as a white banner, on whose snowy folds the anchor and the dove are wrought, — symbols of hope and peace, — but the reputation of your government? Here is liberty for which centuries have sighed. Here property and life are respected; here conscience is free, and education to be had for the asking. This, friends, is what you owe to government; and, owing this, when the government was imperilled it became to us all a duty and a joy to give and die that the majestic structure over our heads might not fall, involving us in common ruin.

But, my friends, if such is the value of good government to the earth (and that I have not exaggerated it you can judge), what must be the value of it to heaven? If its presence and protection is needed to inspire and protect the inhabitants of our little globe, who can express the need of its presence and protection among the vast populations which people the universe of God? And, if its absence is disastrous here, what dire confusion and irretrievable disorder would result from its absence there! Nay, more: if personal suffering and death are not to be weighed in the balance over against the public good as expressed by human necessities, what suffering to man should interfere with the preservation of law and order throughout the domains of that vast republic of which God is president and head? My hearers,

fix in your minds to-day, and let the thought lie embedded in your memories forever, that the pillars which uphold the structure of universal security must never be shaken. No trifling with the foundation upon which the hope of the universe rests! Races before the eye of God, as armies before the eyes of men, may be swept away; over the grave of many an order and rank heaven may gaze: but above all these considerations remain forever and unchangeable the purpose and necessity of God, — government. All else may topple and fall; but this shaft of central authority must remain. The stars may fade, and fail in their courses; but the sun itself must abide forever at fullest orb, forever performing, as it revolves in its circuit, its ministrations to all.

Now, I submit to your candor to say whether there can be any correct theology or theological argument from which this matter of divine government is excluded, or in which it is allowed little prominence. Can there be any adequate discussion of any principle or practice touching rights before the law, unless the existence of law, and its supreme right to maintain itself, is first cordially acknowledged? All of you say at once, "Certainly not." Without government, there would be no rights or privileges to discuss. From it, as branches out of the trunk, all these proceed. Its existence is the source and guaranty of every thing valuable. Indeed, might we not say, and say truly, that theology is but an investigation into that government, and the ways and methods in which its principles are expressed in

daily and practical administration? He who even prays or sings to God, without conceiving of and addressing him as the head of a government, prays and sings to no purpose. The very essence of a petition is, that it is the cry of a lower to a higher, — the ruled to the ruler; and the harmonies that swell in circles of song around the footstool are significant, because sounded in praise of Him who is “King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

But will that one in this audience to-day, who is most interested in this presentation of truth because he has seldom if ever heard it preached, tell me if there can be any government without law; and how law can be law, and not pronounce penalties; and how penalty can ever be expressed through any other medium than punishment? As that penalty, no matter what, pronounced by the law, is uninflicted, the law itself is disregarded and dishonored; and by so much as its existence and enforcement were helpful of government, by so much is that government weakened and endangered. No reasoning can be safer or surer than this; no conclusion, no matter to what it may lead, more indisputable, and beyond question.

Now, let us take one step farther, and inquire, What is the first aim and instinct of government when attacked? Get the idea well in mind. When a government finds itself in the presence of enmity and revolt; when the ground begins to heave and tremble under its feet, and all its honor, all its glory, all the good it signifies for man, yea, and its very

existence itself, are in jeopardy, — what, I say, is the first thought, the first instinct, of that government? Why, pause a moment, and reflect. I am speaking to an American audience, and in a city where patriotism is hereditary: I am speaking in a State whose high honor it is to have shed the first blood to establish and the first blood to perpetuate the government of our country. You remember the spring of 1861, the fall of Sumter, the 19th of April, and the blood which Massachusetts poured out as a libation to liberty upon the stones at Baltimore, when the noble Sixth marched through that city toward the capital, — you recall, I say, the excitement, the alarm, the anxiety, of those days, when men feared that liberty was passing away, and the government which had fostered us so long and well was about to perish from the face of the earth. Well, what was the first thought of the government and the loyal people in that hour of peril? What was the one instinctive cry that leaped to every lip? It was this: “Preserve the government!” “Without a government we are nothing,” said all. “Right or wrong touching this matter of slavery, the government must stand.” “What is money without a government?” exclaimed Wall Street; and, opening her coffers, she said to the government, “Take and use: only defend yourself.” “What is knowledge without a country?” echoed the student; and, dashing his “Horace” to the floor, he shouldered a musket. “What are lands and home and children without liberty?” cried the farmer; and, leaving the plough to rust in the

furrow, he started for the capital. In an hour the American people awoke from their trance of indifference, and saw, as a man sees a mountain illuminated by lightning at midnight, the relation of government to liberty, wealth, and whatever is most precious to the race ; and the first instinct of government, which, as with the individual, is self-preservation, found expression in the loyalty of the hour.

Through this illustration which our own recent history so aptly furnishes I am able to answer the question, "What is the first aim of government as against rebellion?" It is to perpetuate itself. Let a government be attacked, let alienations between sections spring up, let hostile combinations be formed, and its first instinct, its first thought, is not mercy, is not forgiveness, toward those in revolt, but defence and perpetuation of itself. The sword, and not the branch, is the symbol through which that government gives expression to its own subjects and before the world of its nature and determination : and the purer that government, the wider its influence for good, the greater and more needed the protection to the good it extends, the stronger is its determination to strike ; the more like a statue of inspired granite does it become over against such as would assault it to its overthrow.

Allow me to inquire if this principle, this law of preservation, does not extend to all kinds of government, divine as well as human, and as endangered by all manner of rebellion, spiritual as truly as physical ; and, if so, who shall put a limit to that de-

fence against devils and wicked men which the government of God shall feel itself called upon to wage for its security and continued existence?

But, friends, is there not one other consideration which a government, when attacked, must never ignore? The first, as we have said, is self-preservation: the second is vindication. It must not merely continue; it must continue with honor: it must stand an object of admiration to its friends, and of fear to its foes.

The latter duty is, indeed, co-existent with the former; for, in order to be permanent, a government must be honored. The true basis of authority is not physical force. The police regulations of your city, by which life and property are protected, do not maintain and uphold law: there is, lying back and underneath all these, a public sentiment, a public opinion, without which your municipal courts would be in vain. This respect, on the part of its subjects, a government must be strong and honored enough to command. It must be able to defend and vindicate itself from all insult and hostile intrusion. Thus constituted, and thus alone, does it have in it the elements of endurance. Generations pass; but it abides. Centuries serve only to render it more stable. The fathers fall on sleep; but the children continue to reverence and love what they founded. But if a government lack this power to command the respect of its subjects, this ability to vindicate its honor when insulted, who can predict stability to it? What is more pitiable than a weak, nerveless,

cowardly government, irresolute in its purpose, halting in its performance, supplicatory in its posture? While patriots blush in very shame, the insolent deride and defy it. We have had such a nerveless, cowardly, and weak government in our day, in this country; and the last three months of President Buchanan's administration were as corrupt and shameful as men ever blushed for. No wonder that Europe, in view of what it saw at Washington in the winter of 1860, proclaimed that the Great Republic was breaking up. Europe had seen those symptoms of dissolution before, and knew what they meant. They were right: the republic was breaking up: half the stones in the majestic structure were sliding from their places. For three months we had no government. There was no pilot at the helm. There was a mob, and a cowardly, brutal mob at that; and that was all the government we had, until Massachusetts, girded for war, with the old battle-light in her face, had gone through Baltimore, leaving on the stones of its streets the marks of her footprints in blood.

Continue the illustration previously used. Suppose our government had not vindicated itself, had not summoned armies into the field, and appealed to the sharp cruelty of the sword to assert its right, where should we have been to-day? Where would have been the government, where liberty, where the hope of the world? *These would not have been.* A crisis had been reached. The temple was opposed to a pressure it might not resist. The old mortar of the

Revolution must be remoistened with fresh blood, and the arches of constitutional liberty reset, and more stoutly braced. The necessity was accepted, — accepted, too, in the interest, not of revenge, not of hardness of heart, not of cruelty, but in the interest of justice, of liberty, and the greatest good of the greatest number. And to-day, owing to this vindication of itself, which necessarily implied punishment to many, and suffering to all, the republic stands like a pillar of fire before those nations of the earth which are journeying by circuitous routes from oppression toward some happier state and fortune. The government has vindicated itself, and is as an asylum whose doors are never shut to the distressed of the world.

But, my friends, if such is the supreme right and duty of a government to perpetuate and vindicate itself, if such is the necessity of government on earth, what words can express the necessity of a divine government in the universe, and the right and duty of God, its head, to perpetuate and vindicate it? But how, pray, does a government vindicate itself? Does it vindicate itself when it winks at deeds calculated to overthrow it? when it connives at plots which have for their object its destruction? when, out of weak pity and maudlin sentimentalism, it withholds deserved punishment from those who take from forgiveness a larger license to sin? Is that the way for a government, human or divine, to defend itself? No orator dare claim it before an audience unconfused by irrelevant considerations. Deeper than reason,

deeper than education, in the human heart, is the instinct and acknowledgment of justice. In every generous, order-loving man is a principle which prompts him to admire any exhibition of strength put forth in defence of rights and institutions essential and salutary to man. Hence it is that all attempts to emasculate a people's idea of God have ever failed : whether his name has been Jupiter or Thor or Jehovah, it has ever been the symbol of power, of majesty, of omnipotent might. Whether, as with the prophet, the human mind was taught to conceive of him as one "who inhabiteth eternity," whose "throne is from generation to generation, and endureth forever," or, as pictured in classic song, at the head of a feast, surrounded by drunken gods and goddesses, — however seen, through whatever debasing medium, he invariably appeared as a ruler and a king. It has been left for some visionists of our day to paint him with the bolt dropped from his nerveless hand, the august majesty of his bearing gone, and all the terror of his might departed. Heaven, to them, is not a country peopled with well-ordered, and therefore happy masses, but a land inhabited by an amiable mob ; and God himself, instead of being the head of a government, the executive of divine legislation, a weak collection of harmless and fatherly impulses ; a mild, benevolent being, too gentle to oppose, and too weak to attempt to punish, the wicked. To this somewhat fashionable idea of God the idea of a divine government is opposed ; for government means law, and law means penalty and punishment to

all who disobey. And if heaven is the seat of a government, a government which in its moral application rules over us all, then it is not the home of amiable chaos, an harmonious Babel, a mild and benevolent anarchy.

If there were any need to show the necessity of a strong government at the head of universal affairs, it might be found in this thought, that the subjects of this government are divided into two widely-different classes of beings, — the good and the evil, the obedient and the rebellious. The whole universe, if I might so express it, is exposed on all sides to the intrusion of the powers of evil, formidable in numbers, and bitterly hostile in spirit; and nothing save the government of God stands between them and the consummation of their evil intentions. This is our shield and buckler, this our strong tower of defence, our present help in time of trouble. This it is that speaks, and the tides of evil know their bounds. Hell, which had rolled its billows up as if to engulf us, hears the voice of omnipotent command, and melts with sudden lapse to fiery foam. If, my friends, I seek to elevate the idea of a divine government, and to make you all familiar with it, it is not only because I deem it true, nor because it is needed to harmonize the Scriptures, but also because I draw, as a follower, of God, great consolation from it. Behind this thought, my hope, when assailed, retreats, as birds, when a tornado is on the mountains, swoop to the shelter of a granite ledge. When the violence of evil fills the land, and the high places of the earth rock and sway; when

wrong triumphs over right, and the mean and the wicked and the base gain ascendancy; when injustice is expressed in statute, and license to sin legislated and hawked about for sale; when the Gospels are perverted by educated folly, and the Church sleeps, while vices, like serpents, coil and nestle in her bosom, — my hope of liberty for my country and my race finds its refuge and lodging-place in the assurance that “God reigns.” Is it not true, that, more than once during the dark days of the war, this thought it was which upheld us? And he of blessed memory — Lincoln the just — turned with all his people more than once to the Lord of hosts for strength.

I have now discussed the value of government, and your minds followed on to the conclusion, that beyond all else was it needed, and beyond all else it must be preserved, in the universe. We next inquired into the aim, the very first instinct, of government when attacked; and we found it to be this, — first, to perpetuate itself; and, growing out of this, secondly, to vindicate its right to exist by punishing its enemies, and protecting its friends. And, finally, we have remarked upon the need of a strong central government in the universe, and the consolation that its existence affords to the good. Now, to conclude, what relation does the death of Christ hold to the government of God? It holds this relation: It answered the same purpose as the punishment of the sinner would answer. God might now

pardon, and the demands of his government to the last letter of the law be complied with. The problem was, How could God be just, and yet the justifier of the unjust? Now, go down to any judge in your city, when a criminal stands before him guilty by his own confession, and ask him to forgive that criminal; and he will say, in reply, "How can I do this thing you ask, and remain upright? how can I let this criminal go unpunished, and remain true to the principles I represent?" Suppose some judge should fall to doing this thing, — not in one case, but in many cases; should, in fact, make it a rule, and go on releasing, day after day, all the criminals brought before him: what would be his reputation in your city? Suppose some clergyman should preach, Sunday after Sunday, that the judges who punished thieves and burglars and assassins were harsh, cruel, and revengeful men; that they were not kind and merciful and loving, because such qualities of heart were inconsistent with their inflicting such terrible penalties on their fellow-creatures: what would you say? Or suppose he should proclaim that the duration of the punishment was out of all proportion to the crime, and that no good and benevolent judge would ever consign a man to imprisonment and suffering which would last as long as he would last on account of a crime which did not take five minutes for him to commit: what would you say? I am not talking theology to you; I am not trying to change your views; I am talking of principles of public justice:

and I ask you, as man to man, what you would think of a person who should preach such stuff.

But suppose, again, you should go down to that judge about to pronounce sentence upon some criminal, and, ascertaining that something might be substituted in the place of his punishment equally satisfactory to justice, equally honorable to the law, equally acceptable to the judge, present the equivalent — perhaps your own person — to the court in behalf of the criminal, and then ask the judge to let the man go, and the court should say, “Justice being satisfied, the law being equally honored, public safety equally secured, I most gladly acquit the prisoner.” My hearers, this is precisely what Christ did for you and me. This is the way that God can be just, and yet the justifier of the unjust; this is the philosophy of salvation as held by the orthodox churches; this is the relation of the atonement to the divine government; and thus pardon and eternal life can come to every soul now before me. My hearers, you are not excited; you are not wrought up either by invective or exhortation: you are in a calm, reasonable state of mind; you are capable of correct judgment. I would be willing that you should sit as jurors, if I were being tried for my life, in the very state that you are in now. Let me, then, ask you, Is not this method of salvation considerate and reasonable? Would you have it honor the lawless? Are you not glad that the divine government over you is administered according to the highest princi-

ples of public justice? Whose honor is hurt, whose sensitiveness rudely touched, whose intellect imposed upon, by this scheme of salvation? No one's. Then let every heart be lifted in gratitude to Him who is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.

We ask you to accept of Christ only so far as you need him. We present him to you who are ingulfed in moral dangers, only as a rock built up in the midst of the waters, and toward which the wave-like mercy of God heaves you. If you do not need him, then to you, friend, our argument has no point. If you stand to-day innocent before the law; if your conscience has nothing to regret or condemn; if, weighed in the scales of God's exact justice, you are weighted with the full measure of holiness; if you can go to your heavenly Father as to one against whom you have never sinned, as to one you have always and in every thing lovingly obeyed, — then in very truth you need no pardon, and the word "forgiveness" has no sound of sweetness to your ears. But if you have not so lived (now mark my words as the words of a friend); if back of you are deeds committed and deeds attempted of which you can say nothing save to condemn and regret; if you have lived otherwise than in perfect obedience to God; if your record is not above the reproach of your own judgment and conscience, — then I beseech you to put yourself in such a position to-day as shall make the throne of justice a throne of mercy. Remember that the "ter-

ror of the law " is born of your criminality before it, and is measured by the degree of your guilt.

My people, more than once have I, in thought, lifted myself above the skies, and stood within and beyond its all-circling walls of ether. More than once, closing my eyes to the things of earth and sense, have I stood amid those who talked in music, and were clothed in white. More than once, by faith, have I visited the wonderful city described to us by him who closed the Bible with his inspired vision. I have seen the walls fit to encircle Deity ; the gates, through the pearly opening of which the Ineffable passes. Nor was the river of marvellous quality hidden. I have seen it ; I have gazed upon it with lips that quivered to touch the tide, which, being touched, banishes the sense of thirst forever. And other wonderful sights were not wanting : harps and crowns and sandals of gold, — all were there ; but in the midst of all, higher than all, more majestic, to describe which the pen refuses, saying, " Give me another and a nobler language, or I pause, being unable," rises the throne of God. From under it the river of life has its source. There it is born ; there it begins to flow. There is no voice in heaven that does not sound in praise before the throne ; there is no harp that does not join the voice. The angels journey wide and far ; but never do they cease to sing : their flight is one long line of song. All this have I seen. But there is One, who sitteth on the throne, I have not seen : I have not even dared to think I saw. His brightness

veils him. Like the sun, he hides himself behind the fervid outgoings of his glory. Of him all sing,—of him, the Invisible; and the words of the endless song are these (chant them in your thoughts as you go down to your homes): “Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!”

SABBATH MORNING, DEC. 10, 1871.

SERMON.

TOPIC.—HUMANITY THE BEST PROOF OF DIVINITY.

“JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO THEM, GO AND SHOW JOHN AGAIN THOSE THINGS WHICH YE DO HEAR AND SEE: THE BLIND RECEIVE THEIR SIGHT, AND THE LAME WALK; THE LEPERS ARE CLEANSED, AND THE DEAF HEAR; THE DEAD ARE RAISED UP, AND THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.”—Matt. xi. 4, 5.

JOHN was in prison; and a dungeon was a hateful place to him. All his life long he had been accustomed to freedom,—the freedom of the hills and valleys and desert-places. Until now he had been as untrammelled as the winds which blew along the Jordan. He had been a child of nature, and humored in every caprice of impulse and movement. He went where he pleased, and slept where he pleased. His skill furnished him with his daily food. He taxed the bee and locust, and compelled them to yield him sweet and nutritious tribute. He knew no more of cities and dungeons than an American trapper on the frontiers when a thousand miles of happiness stretch between him and the sorrow and vice of crowded towns. Of all the men mentioned in the New-Testament history, there was not another

unto whom prison-life would have been so trying, or a dungeon so dreadful, as to John. Luke would have whiled the tedious hours away in meditation on his favorite science; Peter been upheld by his high, dauntless, and impetuous courage; the “beloved disciple” borne with sweet patience his fetters, sustained by the remembered voice and face and loving caress of his Master: but John the Baptist, this untamed eagle of the Judæan hills, this ardent, imperious forerunner of the Messiah, rude and fierce in the very overplus of zeal and energy,—how he must have felt the pressure of bondage! how he must have fretted and chafed at his imprisonment!

It was not because his dungeon was silent and lonely that it would oppress him: he had been a lonely man all his life, and familiar with solitude; but it was the loneliness of nature, which is sweet, and the solitude of choice, which is delightful. Never, until now, had he known bondage. Never, until now, had the earth and sky, the woods and mountains and bright sun, been hidden from him. He who had, from his infancy, breathed the free air,—free himself as it; had been his own master, and gloried in his rude mode of life, and loved it passionately; whose spirit resented even the restraint which accompanies contact with men, and a residence in one fixed abode,—was now in a Roman prison, and confined to a dungeon-cell.

Nor must the circumstances of his imprisonment be forgotten. They were peculiarly calculated to fret him. Every thing conspired to provoke him to unea-

siness. Suddenly, almost fiercely, he had issued from the wilderness before the eyes of the startled people. Rude and scant in apparel, a wild man of the woods almost in dress, with stern aspect, and words of sterner command upon his lips, impelled by a terrible earnestness, he went up and down and through the country-side, calling upon the nation in a voice of thunder to "repent." The Scripture, with that vivid simplicity and directness of description which distinguish it, speaks of him as a "voice." The man is forgotten in the message, as the cloud is unnoticed in that instant when the awful bolt rives it. The terror of one sense interrupts the working of another. The ear is so appalled, that the power of the eye is suspended for the moment; and the trembling creature fears nothing, save that the heavens are coming down in ruin upon him. So it was with John. He was not a man: he was a "voice," a strange and awful warning sent out of God; a voice of thunder to shake men's consciences, and make the ruddy face of healthy sin turn white. How well he fulfilled his mission you know. The terrible "voice" smote all alike. It was terribly impartial in its severity. Against false priest and false ruler it hurled a common denunciation. It went home to the consciences of men as the voice of righteousness always will. He became noted, feared, loved. Followers flocked to him. Success accumulated. His prophecy was on the very threshold of fulfilment. The Messiah was come. Now it was, when every thing was auspicious, every thing hopeful, and the grand consummation, as

he supposed, at hand, that Herod struck, and John, in the language of the Scripture, "was thrown into prison." From the very centre of converging activities, from the hurry and bustle of a reformer's career, from the van of a great onswEEPing religious movement, with the ground-swell of all the prophecies under and back of it, and to which his life and labors were as the gathering crest ready to break into purest white, — in one hour was he taken, and consigned to a dungeon-cell.

For a few days he doubtless was resigned. He had a hope with him; and hope is ever the parent of patience. His hope was, that Jesus of Nazareth would push on the work he had so grandly urged forward, and the cause should not suffer. "If he is the Messiah," he doubtless reasoned, "he will do what I would have done, — only better. He will be another 'voice,' only louder than mine, to this people. His anger at their sins will be more fierce than mine, his warning-cry more terrible." So he reasoned and mused and waited. Days passed; and what days they must have been to him! — days of suspense, of hope, of gathering dread. Weeks multiplied, and with them his fears. A re-action came. An awful revulsion of feeling occurred. Suspicion and doubt took possession of his soul. Was Jesus the Messiah, after all? Might he not have been deceived? "If he is the Messiah," he might have said, "why does he not proclaim himself? Why does he let me languish in prison here, under a foreign tyrant's power, when, by one word of his omnipotent

might, he could release me? Why, if he is the long-promised King, does he not gather an army, and assert his authority? Why does he not denounce the nation's sins as I did? Why make himself so common with the crowd if he is to be their great High Priest? Why does he supply slander with its strength, and compromise himself at banquets and feasts, and by companionship with the hated publicans and scandalous sinners?" Such must have been the agonizing interrogations that John put to himself as he sat brooding in his prison-cell. He could not answer the voice of his own anxiety, nor longer endure the agony of doubt. At last he got a chance to communicate with some of his followers; and he said to them, "Go to Jesus of Nazareth, and put this question directly to him. Tell him that you come from me. Go and say, 'Art thou he that should come? or do we look for another?'"

Such, friends, were the antecedents of this message, such the position of John. Let us attend a moment to the circumstances of its delivery.

The disciples of John left him, and hurried away to find Jesus. What must have been their feelings! and how their master's face, as they saw it last through the dungeon-door, must have haunted them! They knew how much the answer meant to him. They knew in what a suspense he would wait their return. Very likely, they shared in John's doubts, felt his suspicions, and visited on Jesus, mentally, his censure. Impelled by their own anxiety, and love for their master, they hurried along. Men in such a

frame of mind as they were, and on such an errand, could not lag by the way. At last they came to where he was, and, approaching him, delivered word for word the message of their master: "Art thou he that should come? or do we look for another?"

Apparently, Jesus did not answer at once. His answer plainly indicates this. He had been engaged in ministrations of mercy before they broke in upon him. He continued his labor of love; while John's messengers looked on, waiting. We do not know how long he delayed his answer, — evidently long enough for them to see and get an idea of what he was doing: for instead of answering them directly, "I am he; I am the long-promised Messiah; I am the one to whom John was as a forerunner and herald," he said, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the *poor have the gospel preached to them.*"

This, then, was the climax of many evidences; the last, greatest, and surest proof of his Messiahship: not that he was exercising miraculous power; not that he was by a supernatural and divine authority commanding sight to blind eyes, and strength to paralyzed limbs; but that the poor had the gospel preached to them; the despised, forsaken, neglected outcasts of the country were recognized as fit subjects of religious influence and God's love. He knew that this, to John, would be the greatest possible proof of his Messiahship. And then it was that the truth

which heads this discourse as its topic received its first and noblest expression ; and it was no less a personage than Jesus himself, your Saviour and mine, my Christian brother, the Head of this church and of all churches, who declared that humanity is the best proof of divinity.

His disciples, doubtless, returned to John, and told him what they had seen and heard, and the answer Jesus had sent back to his interrogation. He was content. He saw that this was a greater than a prophet, — even God himself ; and the violent death that soon after came to him found him ready ; and, sudden and swift as it was, he died, doubtless, cheered and sustained by the knowledge that the cause that he loved better than life was in the hands of One able to move it on in abounding triumph.

I ask you, therefore, friends, to observe that the object of the Christian religion is to make men humane. Humanity is the road along which men are to walk up to that high level of perfection which lies like a plateau before God. Christianity seeks to make men better and better, until they become perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect. Its object is to bring all members of the human race together in love ; to wipe out all distinctions which now separate, all customs which now divide, all prejudices which cause variance between man and man. No follower of Christ is truly Christlike until he feels toward the whole world as Christ felt and feels. Until you pity as he pities, love as he loves, forgive as he forgives, judge as he judges, you are merely

babes in Christian attainment : you have not come to his perfect stature. It is not to make men think alike, but feel alike in their love one for another, for which the Spirit works. Two brothers may not think alike on a thousand subjects ; they differ in tastes, views, opinions : but the same fraternal impulse is in the bosom of either, and it constitutes a holy and an everlasting bond. He who has the most of this fraternal feeling in his heart, who feels his brotherhood and kinship with the race most warmly, who connects himself through his affections and efforts with the poor and neglected of the earth most directly, — he it is who is most divine.

And now, friends, let us examine into this matter ; let us ascertain whence this humane element comes, and by what law of growth, if any, it is developed in the heart.

To start with, man, in the barbaric state, is not humane. The impulse of selfishness prompts all his acts. He regards only himself. His selfishness is gross and vicious : it is the selfishness of the tiger or hyena, — watchful to smite, and quick to steal ; a selfishness that is brutal, and knows no contentment save when gorged to satiety, and safely ensconced in its lair. This is the state of the cannibal, and of all those who acknowledge no law but that of animal instincts. There was a time when the earth was almost peopled with such. Our own Saxon forefathers were of this number. Remember that every people's idea of heaven exactly gauges their humane attainment ; and the Saxon's paradise was a huge banquet,

where the tables groaned under their load of coarse animal food, and the revellers drank their wine from the skulls of their enemies. In this state, every man is master of himself the same as a mastiff is. He knows no wants but those of his appetites, no law but the indulgence of his passion, no joy but the fierce pleasure of his exercised ferocity. His home is a hut ; his children, servants ; his wife, a slave.

The first result that Christianity produces in such a rude and fierce being is to develop his emotional capacity. Love begins to exert its power in his heart. The mother of his children receives a new dignity, and ceases to be a mere drudge. Partially, and in indirect ways, he receives her as his companion. A low order of domestic life is born, and his hut becomes a sort of home. He acknowledges, to some extent, the obligation of parentage ; and he becomes the official head of a family. This quickens his pride : he aspires to prominence, power, and authority. As his children multiply, the dignity of his position grows ; and the tribal relation is established.

You see how the man is being gradually made generous. Envy, jealousy, pride, fear, and other low impulses, push him on toward nobler emotions and experiences. He thinks now of many besides himself. His position makes him generous. He plans now for others. He is still selfish, it is true ; but his selfishness is of a nobler sort than it was. It is not now brutal. His sovereignty makes him a protector of others ; and this educates him into a knowledge of rights.

Self-interest compels him to be, at least, somewhat just, honest, and courteous. The sense of responsibility and the stimulus of ambition render him grave, thoughtful, and kindly. The cannibal has become the chief of a tribe.

Out of this germ, as you all know, friends, as from an unpromising seed in a sterile soil, springs national life. The tribe grows to be a nation, and the chief becomes a king. This is a long step in the right direction; for, in national duty and life, human nature is lifted to a higher terrace of effort and feeling. Citizenship brings to the individual the knowledge of rights, and, in so doing, introduces him to a new and wide realm of duty. It links him in sympathy with many whom he has never seen, and will never see. It reveals and inculcates the idea of brotherhood. He no longer stands apart by himself: he has been swept into a circle, and made to join hands with others. He is one of a mighty brotherhood: the charm of a common name and destiny, like a father's blessing, is upon all. Wherever two Americans meet, they meet as brothers.

You see, now, how the national element is useful to God. It is one step, and a long one too, toward love for man: it is in the interests of that fraternity which regards every human being as a full man and brother.

I ask you to observe how plainly God is manifesting his desire that all nations should be at peace, and live in amity, one with another. Christianity is evidently accomplishing this result. The age in which we live is a remarkable one. The hand of the Lord

is under this generation ; and, in spite of the pressure of all its vices, it is being lifted up. The forces of many centuries have culminated in this. The lightnings of heaven are made to shoot the thoughts of men around the globe. The sea has felt the pressure of the divine foot, and throbs with messages of love. The language of inspired poetry is no longer figurative ; for, in very truth, “ deep answereth unto deep.” The sympathies of men are no longer pent up ; they are no longer local : they are universal. The swarthy and the fair, the pure and the stained, the free and the bound, are linked in the clasp of a hitherto unacknowledged brotherhood. The old warfares are hushed. The hovel and the palace cease to contend. Men think and feel and act differently than aforetime. The birth of a babe in a manger at Bethlehem, nineteen hundred years back, revolutionized the world. The cross is the pivot around which all science, all progression, all upward tendencies, circle and swing with an ever-expanding circumference. Humanity has been quickened. The hand of the Healer has been laid on the paralytic, and his veins tingle to the rush of a new and richer circulation. Behold our liberty ! Witness ideas of government growing daily more humane. Consider our charities. Estimate the influence of our myriad schools and colleges scattered all over the land thick as kernels of wheat in the rear of the sower. Hark to the snapping of fetters around the globe ! My people, the Spirit of God is on the earth, and working mightily in the hearts of men, inclining them to peace and good-will.

In a thousand ways, God is appealing to that higher and purer part of man implanted at birth, and yielding to which he becomes unselfish. "Put yourselves," he says, "in all your policies and enactments, on the side of humanity, and you shall succeed." The nation that despises this exhortation of God shall perish.

You must not think that this humane feeling, this beautiful and fragrant flowering-out of Christianity, is to be monopolized by any class of men. Ministers and missionaries can give no lovelier expression to virtue and humane sentiment than a merchant or lawyer or carman. A business-man can be mean or noble in his business, as he chooses. He can seek wealth for the sake of being rich, — for the sake of the power, luxury, indulgence of appetite, or license to his passions, it will buy; and some are moved by such a low and wicked impulse, shown by the fact that they become more selfish, proud, and worldly with every passing year. Time ripens them for the grave, but not for heaven; and although they own millions here, live in palaces, and are known with envy of many, they shall not have even the garment of a beggar wherewith to clothe their nakedness when they stand before God. There is another class of men in whose heart Christian principle is a power. They love money only because it enables them to minister to others' happiness. This purpose underlying a man's life ennobles him. He is ambitious; but his ambition is of a large, a divine kind. He pushes himself out through word, example, and gift, as men push life-boats out to sea to save the shipwrecked.

It is a brave sight, and one which makes the heart leap, to see stalwart men fling a boat out through the surf, and themselves into it. Amid all their straining at the oars, with eyes full, and blinded with the spray, the brave fellows think not of themselves, but of the forms that are clinging to the rigging, or lashed high up on the swaying mast. So the merchant who is truly Christian feels as he toils at his business. He thinks not of the money he will make and hoard up, but of the good it will enable him to do. Do not say that this is overwrought and poetical: if it is, you are very bad men; you are not Christians. The Master cannot own you as his disciples. You are not his disciples: you are the disciples of Mammon. You are not faithful over a few things; and God will never make you ruler over many things.

The mercenary spirit is the one you should shun. Remember, you can be a very respectable man, and yet a very bad one. It makes a vast difference what standard you adopt for measurement. We are apt to judge men too much touching their relation to their wealth, and not in their relation to society at large, to the poor, to the Church and their fellow-men. I fear some of you estimate worth by the property standard. That is a vicious measurement. The real question of your worth can never be decided until one ascertains what you are worth to the poor, to the ignorant, to a correct public sentiment, to religion, to God. Ships and stocks and houses cannot gauge manhood. Many a man makes a financial suc-

cess, and is, nevertheless, a pitiful failure. Put him in the balance over against any principle, any divine impulse, and what weight has he? Little, or none at all. He has not even filled the measure of manhood of which the ancients conceived. The philosophy of Socrates condemns him, and the spirit of chivalry would deny him the knightly rank. But go farther, as in justice you must; put him to the test of a true analysis; strip him of his wealth, and what of dignity and estimation it brings him here, and measure him by the manhood of the resurrection, — and how insignificant he seems! Imagine the “new heavens” above his head, and the “new earth” beneath his feet, and what a spectacle he presents! How does your millionaire look now? Who of you is it that would stand in his place? Down upon him from the cloudless spaces fall rebukes; up from the thornless verdure rises a protest. He set himself in all the acts of his life against the best suggestions of earth and heaven, and both smite him with their censure. What companionship can such a man keep in the next world? Into what shining circle, opening to receive him, can his soul step? With whom can he mate? Not with the wise, for he is ignorant; nor with the brave, for he is not heroic; not with the gentle, for he is harsh; nor with the good, for he is selfish. He has loved no one in the Christian sense; he has helped no one in the Christian way. If humanity is the best proof of divinity, then what is there divine in him?

How small and pitiful some men become in death!

Of course it is well that they die ! It is over the graves of such that humanity makes its progress. The most merciful arrangement of God is, that men cannot live a thousand years as they once did. Under such a rule of life the wheels of moral advancement would be blocked. Without death, reform itself would die. The temple in which humanity shall finally be enshrined as priest and king is built from the tombstones of the selfish and unlovely ; and, if men could live as long as they did before the Flood, the Almighty would have need to inundate the earth again in order to wash the pollutions out of it ! Out of the graves of our stupidity and harshness the fertility of the future will be germinated ; and, standing on the mounds of our prejudices, our children will be lifted one grade higher in the humane sentiment of universal brotherhood.

My friends, what is the use of living, unless you can better some soul, and bring it nearer to God ? What gain like to this can the days give one ? To cheer the despondent ; to lessen the grief of those who mourn ; to draw by the irresistible attraction of sympathy and personal goodness the erring to your side ; to impress the fretful with the nobility of patience, checking their noisy complaints by the gravity of your silence ; to lighten the burden of poverty pressing on so many backs ; to supply the young with a worthy ambition, — this is to live. Woe to such as die unregretted ; whose departure brings no moisture to eyes ! Woe to the rich man whom the poor of his neighborhood do not miss at death ; whom the widow

and fatherless do not mourn as a departed friend ; whose departure is advertised, not in the obituary of the press, but in the sudden absence of little luxuries from the bedside of the sick, and needed comforts from the homes of the poor !

My people, I am confident that I am correct in my analysis of Christian forces and results. The true evidence that you love God is found in your love for man. If you do not love your brother whom you have seen, how can you love God whom you have not seen ? No greater mistake can be made than to suppose that Christianity is a creed. Intellectual belief, however correct and biblical, is not piety. Christianity is a principle, and not a faith. Faith interprets, and helps one to realize the principle, but can never supplant it. The desire of Christ is not to get our assent to a certain system of truth. He wants assimilation of our natures with his. The priest and Levite were more correct intellectually than the Samaritan ; and yet you know Christ's judgment. The Samaritan was right in his heart, and wrong in his head ; while the others were right in their heads, but wrong in their hearts. The one was humane, but not orthodox ; the others were orthodox, but not humane : and humanity won the palm from God, as it always will. Love, remember, is the fulfilling of the law.

The power and glory of this church are not found in its traditional strictness of belief, in its doctrinal correctness, or its theological soundness. These may assist somewhat your influence for good, but do not

constitute it. Your power and glory are found in your practical goodness; in time devoted, in money given, in talents consecrated, to Christ and man. It is more honorable to you to-day, as it was more pleasing to God thirty years ago, that you were an antislavery church, than that you were a Calvinistic church. The fact that you are in sympathetic alliance with the temperance movement is more to your credit than that you hold stoutly to the doctrine of native depravity. Our connection with the North-end Mission is a better proof that we are a church of Christ than our doctrinal connection with the Saybrook Platform. It is the fruit on the branches, and not the color of the bark, which decides the nature and value of the tree; and so it is what this church has done for God and man, and not what it intellectually believed, which has made your history, since the day you were organized, so honorable. It is by their fruits that organizations, as well as men, are to be known.

I wish you to note that this mode of judgment will be more prevalent in the future than it has been in the past. The tendencies of the age all set one way. Christ was more than a rabbi, more than a scribe, more than a correct and spirited expounder of the Bible. His heart, his life, was a better proof of his divinity than his head. The best evidence of his Messiahship was that he preached the gospel to the poor. The same rule holds true touching all of us who are his followers. It is your heart-goodness, friend, that connects you as a disciple to your Lord. Mistrust all other evidence. Build all your hope on this. Do

good. Love the brethren. Forgive your enemies. Give freely to the poor. Make your life a moral necessity to many. This is the only exhortation I have it in my heart to address to you. It covers the whole ground.

Many of you love this church. What for? It will do no hurt for you to analyze and answer that question. You are ambitious. That is right. It is right to be ambitious for others' good and God's glory. You desire that this church shall abide as the fathers founded it. So do I. I believe in its doctrines. I believe in its opportunities. I believe that it has a great work to do in this city in the years to come. But I assure you, one and all, that it will not live, and for one I have no desire that it shall live, unless it can live to the quickening of public virtue and the salvation of men. Unless you put it in closest alliance with the unfolding and suggestive providences of God in this city; unless you place it in the van of its humanities, its culture, its piety; unless you connect it with the moral necessities of Boston, as a supply is connected with the want it meets; unless the poor, destitute, neglected, and sinful shall recognize it as their almoner, their refuge, a fountain of overflowing help and assistance for them, — unless you do this, this church will not live, and it ought not to live. The Almighty does not need ornamental churches here, or famous churches, or churches of noble history and grand conservative traditions, of stately decorum, and sluggish, stagnant respectability: he needs churches full of the Holy Ghost, and warm with the fire of a divine zeal;

full of holy energies and benevolent activities ; full of love and sympathy for the masses, and a wise use of every appliance to reach and elevate them. The church that does the least is the least worthy to live.

It has been granted us, friends, to live in an unusual age, such as has not been since the world was. Back of us lie six thousand years of human effort, — effort often misdirected, and yet never entirely useless ; for, whether it led to victory or defeat, it added unto experience, and lifted the level of opportunity higher. Toilsomely the race has climbed the slope, generation by generation, step by step, until we stand at an immense altitude above the fathers ; and yet only sixty centuries are back of us, while eternity lies ahead. We know what is behind : tears, failure, and death are there ; and the hollow air refuses to surrender the moaning of those who died moaning for the light they might never see. We know, I say, what is behind ; but we hold our breath in solemn expectation of what is to come. We feel that here, and all over the world, changes are taking place in the moral and political world such as occasionally come over the earth and heavens at morning when the wind and sun join their forces against night and the fog. The face of God is being lifted upon the nations of the earth, and the divine wind is pulsing around the globe. A gleam of far-off radiance illuminates the darkness ; a delicious movement agitates the air ; the mist is changed to golden fleece ; and, behold, the Sun of righteousness, full-orbed, resplendent with healing on his beams, is rising above the fog ! Rise, then, magnificent

symbol and expression of the Son of God ! Rise, with thy vast disk aglow with fervor, thou fount of living light, and in the blue firmament above us fix thyself, as a king mounts his throne, and takes position before all his subjects ! Our eyes shall hail thee, and our raised hands give thee welcome. The faces of all men shall be uplifted, and, lighted by thy down-streaming rays, a common likeness shall be perceived, as in children born of one father ; and, in that first universal act of intelligent devotion, the long-lost brotherhood of man with man, the world over, shall be perceived and acknowledged, and man, being humane at last, shall be divine.

SABBATH MORNING, DEC. 24, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—ADHERENCE TO GOODNESS IN PRINCIPLE AND ACT.

“LET LOVE BE WITHOUT DISSIMULATION. ABHOR THAT WHICH IS EVIL;
CLEAVE TO THAT WHICH IS GOOD.”—Rom. xii. 9.

THE word “cleave” is a strong word: it is a nervous, intense word, full of vigor and grip. Cleaving is more than adhering: it symbolizes more than a negative cohesion: it expresses a state and condition of positive and sympathetic conjunction, a connection intimate and vital. When a person “cleaves” to goodness in the sense the text inculcates, it is with the energy of a vital alliance, as flesh cleaves to the bones, or as bones to their sockets. His hopes, loves, purposes, and desires are all built up on it as the body is built up on the skeleton: he is corded and thewed to it. It is more than a mere support to what is outward and seen in his virtue. The union is that close, indissoluble union of like to like. Separation, from the very nature of the alliance, is impossible. You cannot separate a kind man from his kindness, or an honest man from his honesty, any more than you can separate him from his intellectual

faculties. Moral qualities are not accidents, but growths. If a man is wicked, then is his wickedness in him as acidity is in the sour apple. Evil does not lie outside of him; is not hung upon him, — something that he puts on or off at pleasure: it is *in* him as blood is in the artery, and as marrow is in the bone. But, friends, the moral character does not alter the seat of its residence. Goodness, like wickedness, is in man, and a part of man. A man does not put off honesty at pleasure. If he is dishonest, he never had any honesty to put off. I do not say that there may not be lapses in morals; for there may be: but such lapses are just what lapses in memory and judgment are, — just what an eclipse is to the sun. The judgment and memory remain, the sun abides still in the sky, although they are momentarily obscured, and fail to perform their natural functions.

Of course you understand I am not speaking of “natural goodness,” as some call it, — amiability, affection, and the like: I am talking of those high moral qualities which come to the heart of man by the touch and infusion of the Holy Ghost, of those elements of holiness which are the marks and characteristics of the new man in Christ Jesus, and of those acts which spring from the possession of these: and I say, that if a professing Christian lies and cheats and deceives, if he overreaches in business, if he slanders his brother, and carries about with him a wicked temper, he warrants the grave fear that he has never been renewed in heart; that his nature has never been made over into the similitude of good-

ness, but is yet in the “gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.”

Now, this is what I am striving to impress upon you, — and I believe it to be in harmony with the Scripture, — that those moral qualities — the affections, the inclinations, the tendencies — which are the result of the Spirit’s operation in the heart are inherent and permanent. They are not mere accidents of one’s circumstances and surroundings: they are in and of the very soul itself; and the acts which they generate are, to the soul so filled, what the beams are to the sun, — the effulgence of itself. Now, no one doubts but that the moral excellences of Christ were peculiarly and strictly his own. Even in thought you cannot separate them from his divine character. You cannot conceive him as existing apart from them. They were truly and verily of him. They were he himself. He embodied them. He incarnated them. They were vibrant in his flesh and blood. But what, pray, is the result of the Spirit’s work in the heart? Into what is the natural man renewed when the transforming power of grace has been experienced? Is it not into the very *likeness of Christ*? Does not the same mind that is in Christ dwell in those who are Christ’s? Is not their goodness, in its residence and character, the same as his goodness? and is not the bond of union which unites them an *essential* union? You pluck a branch from a vine, and is it not in its elements one with the vine? In sap, in fibre, in every mark and constituent quality, the unity, the identity, is supreme. Well, in the realm

of morals, does not the analogy hold good? You take a Christian, — a soul renewed from what it was by the power of God; and I care not where you find it, or under what conditions: the tempest may have beaten it down, a cruel blow severed it; it may have been blown about by the violence of no matter what evil fortune: still, even in a withered and dying state, you will invariably find it of Christ, and like Christ. The man is not, and may never be, a natural man. The kernels may be shrivelled and shrunk, the ear blighted and mildewed: still, at a glance, you know that it is not a tare; it is wheat, — the outgrowth of the golden seed and precious planting of God.

A good man, therefore, incarnates goodness. Goodness is a part of him as it was of Christ. He cannot exist apart from it. The fragrance and the flower are one.

When, therefore, the apostle enjoins us, as Christians, to “cleave unto that which is good,” it is an exhortation to cleave unto our renewed natures; to abide by the principles and the expression of that holiness that is of us and in us. It is very similar to the exhortation to “put off the old man with his works, and put on the new man.” In all the purposes, the hopes and efforts, of our lives, we are to be one with our renewed and sanctified natures; we are to rotate like a planet in its orbit around the centre and source of holy propulsion.

I have said that the connection of a good man with goodness is a vital connection. It is a source of life

to him. He grows on what he evolves, even as an instrument of music improves in itself by the emission of its own sound. Its harmonies feed it; and the melody it yields to-day insures a sweeter melody to-morrow. There is a propagating element in goodness. It is full of parental functions. It is not sterile, but prolific. Its characteristic law is that of birth; and, of all the children born unto it, each is better, nobler, holier, than the precedent cause. You will catch the truth of this when you remember that this is only the counter-truth to that one which expresses the result of our observation, — that evil grows continually worse, wickedness propagates itself into an ever-increasing ugliness of expression. A wicked man grows more wicked both in the nature and degree of his crime. Even as a bad man grows worse, so does a good man grow better, each impelled by the force of the elements in him; and each lives in sympathy with the preponderating influence in him. This last peculiarity mentioned emphasizes the intimate and essential connection of any moral state with the person subject to it, and suggests, that preliminary to all true personal reformation must occur a change in the state or condition of the nature. The vulture nature, you see, must be eradicated or ever you can expect the evil bird to forget its carnal cravings, and change its fierce habits for the peaceful and gentle demeanor of the dove.

The evil-doer has, therefore, a sympathetic relation to the evil in and around him. The souls of all the wicked on earth, of all the lost in hell, are mag-

netically connected. Diabolism flows into and through them all, each being a perfect conductor to all the others. They thrill to the passage of the same intense and wicked current. Hence, as we behold, they act in concert, with one accord, — a banded brotherhood of evil in thought, purpose, and act; missionaries, all, of a gospel of hate and of blood. But, as a check to this (for God fights by arraying law against law, and principle against principle), — as a check to this, I say, we behold as Christians, in and around us, a magnetic connection of the good with the good. The holy are in a lively and irrepressible sympathy with holiness. The good man is good, not merely from the determination of a lofty purpose and the force of habit, but from an impulse in his soul, which, acting with the energy of the solar principle, gives requisite propulsion to all his faculties, endowing each with a power to emit a proper and beneficent ray. The worst representation, because the most unscriptural, is that which presents a man born of the Spirit as cleaving to goodness solely, or even for the most part, because of a continual exercise of his will. It is, indeed, by the exercise of the will; but it is by the exercise of a *renewed* will, — a will previously rectified, and brought into harmony with what it is its duty to decide and do. To every spiritualized mind is a freedom, a sweep, a joy, in all holy exercises. There is to him, now made capable of appreciating and interpreting it, a charm, an attraction, in virtue, which constitutes a continual and continually sufficient enticement. He moves along

the channel of daily duty as a ship which feels beneath it the motion of an ample current moves up a river. He is lifted and borne onward by an impulse as strong as it is exhilarating; and the source, the fountain-head, of the blessed impulse which impels him, is in his own soul. This is my conception, friends, of a good man. This is that form of evidence which to me seems the surest of all marks that one is born of God. How many have within you this witness of the Spirit? How many cleave unto goodness for its own sake, and not from any collateral considerations?

I have thus far been discussing the subject in relation to the nature and the renewed life of the soul. But goodness relates to what is without, as truly as to what is within, man. To cleave to goodness is to cleave not merely to the principle, but also to the expression of it. Goodness is not a simple, it is a complex, conception. It can be predicated of the act as truly as of the character. Incarnated truth, truth clothed in flesh and blood, the truth of the substance, the truth of the soul, — this is one kind of truth. But truth exists in the abstract. It exists in law and formula. It can be found outside of man, outside of his nature and character. Man cannot embody it all, any more than a flower can embody all the elements of sweetness in the atmosphere. Truth is precious as expressed in woman's virtue; and history has made the names of such as would not live when it was lost immortal. The leaf of their honor will never fade; for it is planted by the rivers of water. But, on the other hand, there are truths of government, lying out-

side of human nature, which are worthy of being loved more than the life. Liberty is one of these. Men there have been and are who held and hold it to be worth more than all the world besides. It has been like the charmed mirror in the fable, which had the power to make whatever it reflected beautiful; for men who died gazing at it found even death to be lovely, and died as one who falls asleep in the arms of a great contentment.

Now, one of the beautiful results of gospel influence on the heart is, that it makes it to realize how good goodness is. It parts the incasements, and the beauty and perfume appeal to the senses. I am not theorizing now; I am not parading an orthodox notion: I am speaking from my own experience, and the experience of hundreds before me. We know when the miracle was performed on us. We know when our eyes were touched, and we first saw. There was a time when we did not realize how good goodness is. It was a far-off flower of which we had heard, but had never inhaled. But at last God brought us to it. We breathed the odor as of another world. We saw it fresh with dew which had distilled upon it from the ether that surrounds God, and is to him what common air is to our nostrils, — saw it, and put it in our bosoms; and the proof that it is of heaven is seen in this, that it gains in sweetness with the years.

A Christian, then, is one who perceives and feels the beauty of moral excellence. He cleaves to it with the adhesion of a vital and vitalizing affection.

He grows into it as a germ into a grafted limb. He feeds on its food. He lives in its life. The power of this connection is incalculable. Its elevating and expansive force is beyond estimate. Many of you have felt it. You have felt it in business. It has enabled you to live wider and higher lives than your circumstances engendered. The conditions, the necessities, of your lives are material. They tie you down : you toil ; you delve ; your daily occupation, your duties even, are “of the earth, earthy.” But in your love of goodness, in your connection with it, you have found relief and release. It has lifted you ; it has refined you. You would have lived grossly : this has caused you to live spiritually. You would have forgotten the next life ; but this has made you to bear it continually in mind, until this spiritual forecast is a habit with you, and all your planning and thinking are modified by this conception.

It is, therefore, to professing Christians that the injunction of the text comes with peculiar and expressive energy. We who realize the beauty of that which is good ; we who have felt and do feel its power in our souls ; we who were begotten into its likeness, and bear its image, — we are exhorted to cleave to it.

Now, if you will look within (I mean into your own heart, friend), you will see two classes of thoughts in your mind, two types of imagination, two kinds of emotion, two classes of habits. These differ in their nature, and of course in their expression. Of thoughts, some are good, others bad. Of imaginations, some

are pure, others impure; and the latter, using the senses as their allies, seek ever to gain the ascendancy. Of habits, some are correct and healthful, others evil and injurious. Now, of these two types of nature in you, which do you favor? Which class of habits, for instance, do you nurse? Let the interrogation bring down its full weight upon the conscience. Meet the question face to face to-day, friend. Draw the line, and see on which side you stand.

Or take your imaginations, and catalogue them. Enter that wonderful land, filled with birds which beat the air with wings like night, or trace their circles with vans as white as snow, and tell us which fly the thicker. Is the air above your head dark, or bright? Is it the home of ravens, or of doves?

I caution you here not to judge yourselves by any conventional standard of morals or purity. I am talking too solemnly for you to give a superficial response. I am talking, not of manners and customs and ordinances of man, nor of human society, which is artificial in its structure, and often tyrannical in its applications: I am talking to you on the level of the soul-life. My spirit, sitting over against your spirits, our eyes fixed on the celestial hills, along the shining slopes of which our future homes stand, is speaking to you of a life and communion not limited by the line of ordinary "morals," but by the line of that final and supreme holiness which shall circumscribe us, when, free of these hindering and vexatious bodies, we stand co-sharers with Christ in those liberties and harmonies

which come to those whose thoughts are never checked, because always pure ; whose utterance is free, because it speaks of nothing but innocent feelings ; whose hopes are all realized, because based on holy desires. You understand now of what I am speaking ; and I say to you, Be ashamed here of nothing of which you would not be ashamed there. On the level of your powers and wants and desires now be as pure as you will be on the level of your powers and wants and desires then. Clasp nothing that you cannot embrace before God. Love forever ; but love only what will make you more heavenly to love in heaven.

It is the chief glory of the Bible that it is a book written expressly for erring men. It tells the diseased man how he can be healed. It tells the despairing leper in what river he must go and wash. It analyzes the blood, and directs the discouraged patient what he must do, and where go, in order to be healed. Now, to all you conscious of a double life, — conscious of this duplex class of thoughts, emotions, imaginations, and habits, — it comes to-day, and in the language of the text gives you warning and direction. Looking at you as a creature of impulse, of emotion, it charges you to cultivate those which are noble. Remembering the vast influence which imagination wields over the thoughts, and through these upon the acts, — so much so, that it might well be called the mother of our ambition and our habits, — it enjoins with the vehemence of solicitude and warning that we cleave, and cleave only, to that which is good.

My friends, it is not acts which blacken the soul ; it is not conduct which destroys. These are but the holes which the worms, bred in the very fibre of the wood, have eaten. These are but the fruit and visible witness of a disease which holds the entire body in its power, making the veins its channels, every drop of blood its servant, every pulsation of the heart its slave. The thoughts destroy. The imagination puts the knife's edge to the jugular vein of virtue, and lets the precious current out. You cannot reform a drunkard until you first reform his mind. What needs to be done is to have the craving for stimulants taken out of him. Over against his inordinate desire you must raise up some stronger repulsion which shall be more than a match for his appetite for liquor. This is the true philosophy in every branch of morals. You must change the man himself if you would change his habits. There is no life so hard as a religious life to a man without religion.

Now, observe that there is no religion but the Christian which proposes to meet this first and greatest want of mankind. Examine all other religions of the world, examine all the novel philosophies of the day, and you can find not even the first trace of an attempt to reform man's habits by a prior reformation of his nature. There is no doctrine of a *new birth* in all their creed. There is no confession, apparently no knowledge, of man's first necessity. And yet you all see how fit a doctrine it is, how adapted to meet the end proposed. This is why they all fail. They say, "Take any tree,—no matter

how wild, or how bitter in its fruit, — transplant it into good soil, put it in a spot where the sunshine can reach it, water it abundantly, and the fruit will be sweet and perfect.” You see their mistake. The distinctive characteristics of a tree are not in its surroundings, but in its nature. If that is bitter, it remains true to its bitterness, no matter where you plant it. You must graft in a new vital principle, you must charge all its roots with new and sweeter juices, before the fruit will be what you desire. But such a work requires higher power than man’s: it requires supernatural power; and this supernatural in religion is what they would fain ignore. They want a religion; but it must be a Godless one. They wish spirituality without the Spirit; they wish salvation without the Saviour. You see at a glance their error and their misfortune. Advocates of reformation, they publish no adequate means of reformation. They seek to make men cleave to goodness before they have made them love goodness. Their religion is a deification of the human will and the human taste.

But I, and whoever else preaches the glad news in Christ Jesus faithfully as it is recorded in the Bible, point you to a religion that is of God, and not of man. We do not deceive men by telling them that their disease is so slight, that they can easily cure themselves. We assure them that they are stricken unto death itself, and that no ordinary prescription will avail. Our philosophy is not a Godless philosophy. Our religion is not one of æsthetic culture. Our creed

is not one which proclaims the adequacy of natural forces to redeem man. We know our weakness by an analysis, the certainty of which is proved by the confession of almost universal experience and the unqualified statement of the word of God. We know, and we tell you one and all, that virtue is not easy to the mass of human beings; that no one will cleave unto what he does not love; and that the first step in the reformation of the soul is to rectify the inclinations and tempers of the soul itself. And we say to you to-day, giving voice to the utterance of Him who declared the same to his disciples long years ago, "Unless ye be *born again*, ye cannot see the kingdom of heaven."

Come, then, to the great Physician. Here he stands waiting to receive you. Come with your weakness and your faults, come with your fractured virtue and your broken hopes, come with your blinded eyes, come trembling with doubts, come even in your despair, and you shall be healed. Even as you experience the love of God manifested in the forgiveness of your sins, there shall spring up in your souls, touched by the Spirit, a new, a hitherto unfelt, a wonderful love for him. You will thenceforth cleave to him, not by an effort of will, but instinctively, as a babe to the neck of its mother. You will take hold of him with your soul; you will embrace him with your affections; you will glorify him in your life.

My people, we stand within a step of the glad Christmas-time. The laurel and the evergreen are

gathered,—the one to symbolize the triumph, and the other the everlasting nature, of that goodness, which, nineteen centuries back, came with the coming of our Lord into the world. Over half the globe it is a season dedicated to mirth, and never had laughter a better cause to sound; to gifts of friendship, and never until Christ came did man know how noble and inclusive friendship might become; to charity of heart and hand,—the one forgiving of the faults, the other ministering to the wants, of men. The happy Christmas-time—what does it not suggest of love, courtesy, and peace? Even the poor shall for a single day have a hint of plenty; the happy, an hour in which they can express their happiness; and even he who sees the hope that long has cheered him dying out as dies a fading star, leaving his sky one stretch of unlighted gloom, shall, in his dreams at least, behold it shining with more than its old brilliancy in that other and superior firmament from which no star of all its crowded constellations can ever drop.

O friends! I hear the music of that ancient time. I see the Star and the star-gazers. The sign for which the ages wearily waited has come at last, and the homage of the world begins to move toward Bethlehem. Heaven cannot contain itself. Angels surge over its boundaries, and, cleaving the intervening space with wings that cannot lose their heavenly sheen, sail along the hills of the earth. They sing,—the speech of their native skies is music,—and their chorals sound abroad. What words are these that drop upon the air like

notes which in their sweetness find undying life, “On earth peace”? Peace!—the earth had never known it since the first sin. Its history had been a sea shaken by winds, and tossed. In it millions were ingulfed, and men steered over it only to shipwreck. But still the angels sang, and still the song swells on. Its waves of melody are spreading everywhere; and when the globe is circled, and every breeze shall waft the strains, the earth with a unanimous voice shall hail the joyful Christmas-time, and every man, seeing a brother in each fellow-man, shall say each to his neighbor, “The hour is come at last, — thrice-happy hour! for everywhere, at last, peace is on earth, and good-will to men.”

SABBATH MORNING, DEC. 31, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—MINISTERING TO THE GOOD OF OTHERS.

“EVEN AS THE SON OF MAN CAME NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, BUT TO MINISTER, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY.”—Matt. xx. 28.

I WISH to speak to you this morning upon the subject of ministering to others. I wish to bring out and set before you how the lives of men become unselfish both by an unconscious and a conscious benevolence, and that nobility and spirituality of heart and mind are possible to those even whose energies are spent in grappling with the material forces of the world.

There are two ways in which men can give their lives for men: the one is by the voluntary surrender of themselves to death, and the other by the generous and humane influence of their acts.

The first is the more striking. There is something impressive in the idea of one man dying for another. It was one of the methods God took to force upon men the conviction of his love for them; and Calvary will stand forever as the highest expression of divine benevolence. Christ made it the highest test of love

when he said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." Nor is history lacking in instances of this supreme proof of love, this supreme self-sacrifice for the good of others. Enumerate such as fell in battle, fighting for liberty; summon them from their bloody graves, where, unknown and unnoted, they lie; and what a host you have! Marshal them in companies, in battalions, in regiments, in divisions, in armies: behold what masses, what interminable lines, what endless columns, what a dense array! And yet to each and every one of all these millions life was precious. Each had his joys, his loves, his friendships, his hopes, his dreams: in every case, these were surrendered. They counted not their lives dear unto themselves: they gave them for the common good, — to ransom men from bondage and degradation. Or what shall I say of those who died at the stake, who languished in dungeons, who endured exile and made their graves in foreign lands, who suffered the loss of all things for the sake of truth, being steadfast even unto death? Or shall I speak of those that watch in sick-chambers, wearing their lives out for the diseased, the infirm, the bed-ridden? or of those who serve in hospitals, or flutter like angels of mercy amid the din and dreadful uproar of battle, ministering to the wounded and the dying until they themselves are smitten? or even of the policeman, who, stricken down by the burglar's billet in front of your dwelling, yields up his life for the public safety? Have not all these given their lives for man?

Have they not all imitated, so far as their nature and office would allow, the great sacrifice that Christ made of himself on Calvary? How unmindful we are of the sacrifices that have been made for us! How little do we think of those great examples of faithfulness unto death of which the annals of the world are full! Do we not do well to summon such from their graves, to let them all stand forth in the light of our generous acknowledgment?

But, friends, this is not the only way, or the way open to most, in which we can give our lives to others. It is not in dying, but in living, that sacrifice is possible: and I wish to unfold this, and make it plain to you; I wish to show you a side of your lives, and results, which may not have often occurred to you.

Here is a man who started, thirty years back, a poor boy. He is now at the head of a large business. He sends ships out over all the world; his agents are in every State; he is rich: men say that, and stop there, as if they had summed the results of his life all up. But have they? Is that all? He has given the labor of his life to trade, to commerce, to manufacture; and he has received — what? Wealth, you say, — a few hundred thousand dollars. And so he has. He has received that; but what has he given to society, to the nation, to the world? Benefits unnumbered, I reply, — incentives, opportunities, industries. He has given work to the idle; he has quickened skill with employment; he has kept invention active; he has inaugurated improvements in a dozen different direc-

tions. He has made it possible for thousands to have food and clothes and homes. He has helped to build schools and colleges and churches; sent the word of God to heathen lands; and mingled his life in the current of every reform. Am I to think of such men, and measure them by what their skill and labor and tact have put into their own pockets, and forget all the mighty volume of good that they have added to the spiritual and benevolent forces of the world? Do you not see and rejoice, friends, at the thought that God has made the order of things such, that no man can monopolize the results of his life? You might as well try to fence in the fragrance of a garden as the influence of such a career. While you are thinking only of what you will get by such or such a course, while you think only of your *income*, God thinks of what the race will receive by your temperance, your honesty, your activity, of all the beneficent outgoing of your example. And I say unto you all, that you who are upright, industrious, patient, honorable, are yielding forth day by day for the benefit of mankind more than you receive unto yourselves.

Take the scholar, and watch the outgoings of his life. See where they accumulate; to whom they belong.

I know that this is extremely favorable to the thought I am illustrating; for the world of mind is, by its very nature, less selfish than that of matter. If a man coins an hour's manual labor into a dollar, he can put it in his pocket; he can hide it in the earth;

he can keep it to himself: but if a student or orator coins his activities into a thought, an idea, a sentence, he cannot hide it; he cannot keep it as his own. The cloud might as well clamor to the stream to give back the drop that fell into it as I endeavor an hour hence to call back to my own brain the impressions that it is yielding forth to you. They were mine: they are yours. They cost me toil; but I cannot claim them. They were born with mental travail; are truly my offspring: but I can never have proprietorship even in my own.

No matter how selfish a thinker may be, nor how egotistical or vain, he cannot appropriate himself. He is a fountain that cannot hold itself. Take Webster. He gained honor, office, homage; these were his: but he gave to America, to liberty, to us all, more than he gained for himself. Take Sumner, take Wilson, take Phillips: how little of their own lives such men appropriate! How little can they own themselves! Can Sumner command the brave, the heroic sympathies his words and example have awakened? Can Wilson enrich himself with what he has lavished upon a nation and a race, — the simple purpose, the instinct of honesty, the wealth of self-imposed poverty? Can he whose voice, beyond that of any other man's, has preached righteousness to this nation for thirty years, the smallest portion of whose enduring fame will be that he is the most consummate orator America has yet produced, — can Phillips take unto himself, can he carry with him out of the world, the influence of his words, his example, his

life? I tell you nay. These men, and all in any degree like unto them, do not and can not own themselves. If they have enriched themselves, they have enriched mankind more. They have honored us: they have honored human nature beyond what we can honor them. Their labors, their toils, their struggles, even their glory, have passed beyond their possession, beyond their control. The fountain that had a locality and a name has become a stream; and the stream is emptied, and is emptying itself, into that vast ocean which swells forever, and shrinks not; whose tides will one day circle the world; and whose waves, crested with airy snow, shall break in music on every shore.

Let us illustrate this with another instance. A dozen men make a piano, — one, one part; another, some other. They have worked in different proportions, and have received proportionate wages, — one, five dollars; one, twenty dollars; a third, forty dollars; and so on. They worked for pay, and have received it, and are content. Men inquire how much they received for their work, and are told. They do not think, they do not question, how much those dozen mechanics have given to the world. And what have they given? Let us see. The piano is sold: a father buys it for his children: it is carted home. Now, with that instrument, music has gone into that house. A new, a perennial fountain of pleasure, of profit, of refinement, of consolation, is opened in the centre of that family-circle. When mother is weary, it rests her; when the younger children are turbulent, it

quiets them ; when father comes home from his toil, worn and exhausted, something more restful than sleep comes forth from amidst the keys. It tinkles merrily at the wedding-feast ; it assists the sabbath hymn ; it rolls forth all its melodies at family re-unions ; it cheers, it soothes, it refines, it elevates ; it doubles the charm of the household-circle, and increases beyond measure the salutary influence of home. You see, friends, that even the common day-laborer, who labors with his hands only, does not consume, cannot monopolize, the results of his toil. He is generous in spite of himself, as it were. He gives to others more than he receives himself.

There is, then, one way to look at life, at your daily work, in which it seems dull, prosaic, unspiritual, earthy. Strive as you may to lift yourself, your planning, your toil, your money-making, shall seem one mass of selfishness and materialism. And the Devil is glad to have you look at it in that way : he rejoices when you are so blind that you cannot see the threads of gold and amber that God permits us, by every good purpose of our hearts, to weave into the dull, black woof of earthly effort. And many of you, I dare say, have more than once exclaimed mentally, "What is the use of striving to be spiritual-minded, as my pastor urges ? I came into business when a boy. I put myself in the current of material gain then. My whole life has been one prolonged effort of selfishness." That is one way, I say, to look at life. There may be some truth in it ; and I trust you will profit by the reflection.

But, friend, while some truth lurks in such a feeling, if your life has been, in the main, honest, there is a huge lie in such a statement. During all the years of your effort, God has caused you to unconsciously energize along the line of beneficence. You have not built a store, erected a house, constructed an instrument of music, invented a machine, written a book, or done any thing, that has not blessed others more than yourself. There is not a single creation of your life that has spent all the forces of usefulness on yourself. You have been like the clouds that send down the rain : you could not number, you could not direct, the drops of your influence ; you could not gather them together, and brood over them, and say, "Behold, these are all mine !" And I hope you will all devoutly praise God that you have lived in an age and land so far advanced toward the millennium (when none shall lack, and all shall share with all), that selfishness, in its old inclusive sense, has been impossible to you.

But let me solicit that you go one step farther than this. The extraordinary is only one remove from the ordinary in goodness. Add to this unconscious benevolence a conscious love for man ; a conscious desire to give your life for others, not by the way of dying, but by the use you make of living. If you need an example, you know where to look. I do not refer to Calvary : there is where Christ died. You can never die as he died : you cannot imitate him in that direction. But, friend, if you cannot die as he died, can you not live as he lived ? Behold your example

in the service of his life more than at the hour of his death. If you cannot ransom any one by dying for him, can you not ransom some one by living for him? This hope it is which should hang in the heaven of your life, like that vesper star, which, amid the gathering shadows and the growing darkness, sits luminous and lambent, alone in her evening splendor, queen of the western sky. Say to this orb of hope, "Shine on me, — shine on me living, shine on me dying, — that all my life may be passed in thy light, and all my consolation derived from thy rays at death ; for, so living or dying, I shall be the Lord's."

I have shown you that you are unconsciously benevolent ; that you are daily blessing the whole world by your activities ; and you all see it to be true. I ask you now to realize it : I ask you to let the thought have its full effect upon you. A truth, to be potential, must be apprehended. The only way to be noble in your industries is to see how noble they are. Why, friend, the part you gain is a very small part of the grand gain of your life : it is only what one note is to an anthem ; what one little ray is to that vast body of light which to-day illumines the world. Do not dwarf yourself when your stature is Godlike. How insignificant you will seem to yourself, how insignificant you in very fact are, considered in such a light ! Why, what does my life mean to me ? what types it ? Is it the money I earn ? the approbation or applause I may at intervals receive ? the little fame I may win ? — barely sufficient to keep my name alive

a generation after I am gone. Is that all my life means? Do I gain and do no more than this? I trust I shall gain more. I have a hope, but not of that kind. I will not degrade myself by the smallness of such an ambition. I hope to be mingled amid the unnamed forces of the universe, and thereby make the universe my debtor. As an individual, I am nothing. My petty gains and name will be forgotten: whatever I hoard, I waste; I shall retain only what I scatter abroad. If I can quicken some mind, in that quickening my intellect shall prolong its own life. If I can ease some burdened heart, my own will gain immortal rest. If I can teach the sense of power humility, and link imperious strength with gentleness; if I can make hastiness patient, and seal the murmurer's lip with submissive silence; if I can send one single ray of my heaven-born faith into the darkened world of doubt, or show the infidel that it is more credulous to deny than to believe; if I can bear the inevitable with cheerfulness, and reconcile myself to that I may not change,—then I shall be content. My name may be forgotten, my grave obliterated, and those whom I had blessed unconscious that I ever lived; but I shall still live on among the ranks and orders of beneficent force, a needed and everlasting power.

And so, my friend, it is with you. Never limit your ambition by the material and the temporal. Be not ambitious touching what you can keep: be emulous only in reference to what you can send abroad. The life you find you shall lose: it shall slip from you

at death, and you shall grope forever for it, in vain, amid the stars. I look about me, and see men like eagles walking. There is no stateliness of motion, there is no dignity of poise, in all their movements. With trailing and dishevelled wings they drag themselves around, soiling the pinions, which, being spread, would lift them to the sun. Be not like these. There is but one frame for the picture which an eagle makes, when with vans widespread, and vibrant with buoyancy, disdainful of the earth, with flashing eye that looks unflinchingly at the noonday sun, he hangs suspended above the clouds, a blaze of dazzling plumage: it is the wide sweep of heaven, and the all-encircling blue. And so there is but one frame vast enough to include the human soul when it stands erect, self-balanced, majestic, conscious of its every power and full destiny: it is eternity.

This is the life I would have you live; this is the perch from which I would have you start for the new year's flight, — a flight high-aimed enough to bring you nearer heaven, or carry you into it, if God so wills, before the year shall close. Who of us here can afford to fly a lower flight? I know the effort it will take; I know the atmospheric pressures we must bear up against, the buffeting of whirlwinds we shall meet, and the opposition of adverse currents we must stem. I see the clouds in the shadow of which we stand; I hear the roaring storm through which the soul must pass, — the struggle, and the tumult: but how slight, how unworthy of regard, these seem! They melt, they fade away, they disappear, as I watch the

spirit, with upturned breast, speeding with dauntless flight straight for its native heaven, leaving behind far in its wake forever the storms and darkness of this lower and inconstant world. It shall find cloudless skies and a stormless clime amid the everlasting hills.

I ask you, my hearer, to note the influence of such elevation of thought, such unselfishness of act, upon yourself. Nothing hurts a man more than to seem small and ignoble in his own eyes. It is the slavish feeling that degrades the slave. A base ambition makes the man that cherishes it base. No one can debase you but yourself. Slander, satire, falsehood, injustice;—these can never rob you of your manhood. Men may lie about you, they may denounce you, they may cherish suspicions manifold, they may make your failings the target of their wit or cruelty: never be alarmed; never swerve an inch from the line your judgment and conscience have chalked out for you. They cannot by all their efforts take away your knowledge of yourself, the purity of your motives, the integrity of your character, and the generosity of your nature. While these are left, you are, in point of fact, unharmed. Nothing outside yourself can ever make you smaller than you are to-day. If you shall dwindle; if leanness and inability shall come to any faculty; if you shall lose what makes you an ornament to that rank and order of intelligence to which you were born,—the loss will be a self-inflicted one. Self-degradation is the only degradation man can know.

But, if you will look nobler in your own eyes by such a course of action, how much nobler also will you stand in the opinion of men! It is pleasant to be esteemed. The admiration and indorsement of the worthy appeal to something in man far nobler than vanity. I hope you all desire to be well thought of by the good. He who cares nothing for the opinion of others is not one to receive an opinion from. But there is a way to live in which you cannot be esteemed. You can live so that men will despise you and hate you justly. You can make yourself the embodiment of maxims and habits so wicked and coarse, you can be so sordid and mean and harsh and unfair, that men shall have no feeling toward you but that of contempt. I ask you to live an opposite life to this. I ask you to live so that men shall love you. Adopt right maxims and correct habits. Be so generous that others shall become generous, their natures kindled by the inspiration of your example. Lay up your treasures in the right spot, lest you stand poverty-stricken in the day of your deepest need. In order to seem great to men, be great.

Interrogate yourself, friend. What sort of a life are you living? How do you seem to yourself? What is the judgment others would put upon you if they knew your heart? What is the judgment God puts upon you? Has a hand come forth from the wall? Are the characters visible? If so, what are they? Are you found wanting? If you are lacking in any thing, even by the tithe of a hair, make

good the deficiency. Make it good here, to-day, in your resolutions; make it good in every day of the coming year in your acts.

The noblest use of the imagination, the highest service it can render a man, is to project him to some point down the future from which he can look back upon his life as already lived, and estimate the result of it. I ask you to do this at this time. Lift yourself to some height, and, from the distance of a hundred years from to-day, look back upon yourself. Are you such a man, are you such a woman, as you will then wish you had been? For the conditions of your lives you are not responsible; these were shaped by forces outside yourself, and beyond your control: but at heart, in the aims, purposes, ambitions, and hopes of your lives, are you living as an immortal being should live? Are you flying high enough to drop into heaven, should death check you in mid-career?

This is what I, as your pastor, call spirituality. It is possible to all,—as possible in the store as the pulpit, in the parlor and street as in the study. This must be true, or spirituality can never be realized on the earth. You see where the real forces of the world lie: they lie at the roots of the world. Where do the forces of a tree lie? Whence come its leaves? whence its blossoms? whence its fruitfulness? They do not flutter down from above; they are not hung in rainbows along the sky; they are not flung over it, all threaded and woven, and formed like a mantle from out of the clouds: they lie at the roots of the

tree, in the earth, in the mould, in the damp, unlovely soil. But out of this deadness and dampness, when moved upon by the creative energies, come fragrance and loveliness, and such fruiting as is possible to it. So it is with men. The forces of their lives do not exist in visible beauty at first: they are latent, unperceived; they are packed in with the muscles; they lie seed-like amid unpublished affections; they are rolled along by the current of their ambitions, like diamonds in a turbid stream; they are a part of their forming motives, and unbreathed hopes, and crude, half-digested plans. The angelic does not appear at once. The old mythologies teach that Minerva sprang in an instant, full formed, from the brain of Jupiter. That was a beautiful fable. But we are talking about facts; and, as a fact, neither wisdom nor spirituality comes to life in that way. They are first conceived; they have a growth; they come slowly to birth; then they linger in infancy, and advance to their maturity—to their full stature and splendor of appearance—by degrees, lingeringly. God moves over you leisurely, you see. He acts as one who is so delighted with his work, that he must ever and anon pause in it, and look at it, and enjoy it. He gives the plants time to absorb the moisture of one shower before he darkens the heavens for another. And so I say to you who are in business-life; who are in the rush of gainful pursuits; whose career, in itself considered, is in every sense sordid,—you who represent the soil, the mould, the root-forces, of the world,—I say that from you shall come up the best

spirituality of the age. Christianity, in the person of Christ, was born related to labor. In his youth she was apprenticed to a trade. She took one of her earliest disciples out of a custom-house; a physician was her best historian; and all down the ages her conflicts and triumphs have been in grappling with the material and selfish forces of the world, and overcoming them.

Why, look ahead! Run your eye down the perspective of future years. As wars have ceased, has not trade multiplied? Commerce has, for her father, intelligence; and for her mother, peace. As the one grows, and the other becomes permanent, will not commerce thrive? In the rapid material development of the earth, I see the best proof that the millennium is actually coming toward us. The sun has not yet risen; but the flush on the sky tells from what point he is to rise. The old prophecy expressed the idea when it foretold a day when "the sword should be beaten into a ploughshare." The symbol of death and wasting was to become a symbol of life and accumulation. There is a physical as truly as a spiritual regeneration going on by divine appointment. He who created the material as well as the spiritual forces of the globe will restore both alike to their pristine position and pristine harmony, one with the other. The desert shall yet bud, and blossom as the rose. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree." In an improved agriculture, draining our marshes, irrigating our deserts, and terracing with

beauty and fruitfulness our now sterile hills, shall the old predictions, which have been read so long as poetry, be realized at last in fact.

The truest triumph of Christianity is the triumph of the spiritual over the material. If it cannot illuminate darkness ; if it cannot make the dead vital, and the gross buoyant ; if it cannot straighten what is crooked in man's nature and conduct, and make the bitter sweet, — then it will be, and is, a failure ; for to accomplish precisely this is its confessed mission.

My people, the days of life are not on one level range : they stand one higher, one lower, than another. There are depressions and undulations and slopes, and peaks and summits from whence you get a mighty vision. There are days adapted to our various moods, — days devoted to memory, and days consecrated to hope. There are days when one naturally looks backward, and stands with drooping gaze, and turns his ear to the solemn music of the past. Other days there are that command a large perspective ; and man looks ahead with uplifted vision, and hears the lively movement of joys to come. We stand at this moment within the circle of such a day. It is the last sabbath of a year now past. In it what experiences we have had ! what joys and agonies and temptations ! We have been tested as men who take the risk of death to escape from death. We have been weaker than we thought ; we have been stouter than we dreamed. We have borne what we thought would kill us ; we have been prostrated by what we might have borne. The past is not an undotted plain.

there are arbors in it, and trellised walks, and fragrant borders; to many, triumphal columns, and here and there a grave. Nor is that stretch behind us silent: it is full of voices, — voices of pleading and of warning; and their exhortation will never cease to sound.

I sat last week beneath Niagara, when the sun lay low in the west, and sent its level rays against the face of the fall. I sat upon a mighty boulder of ice frozen from falling spray, within twenty feet of the vast sheet of water which the deep, swift rapids send over close to the bank on the American side: I sat, I say, within twenty feet of the down-plunging mass, which strikes the bottom with so direct, heavy, and continuous a blow, that it shakes the shore, and splits the very air asunder, with the concussions of its power. The sun called home his beams, and disappeared behind the Canadian hills; the brief winter's twilight deepened quickly into darkness; the white mist faded from sight, and the plunging masses of water became invisible: but still from out the gloom the cataract sent forth its solemn thunders, and the darkness shook and undulated as shock and boom swelled forth upon the evening air. And I said to myself, "This is like the voice of God, that sounds the same by day or night. His warnings fail not, and his solemn exhortations never cease."

My friends, we shall move on, and the past will retire from sight. The years will weave their darkness over the face of its experiences, and much that

now is vivid will grow dim, and be obscured ; but the lesson of its experiences, the mysteries in self, nature, and God, it has interpreted, the voice of its warnings and exhortations, will never be silenced. By day and night they will be heard : they will swell around us in solemn and majestic cadence, like the inrolling surf upon a distant shore. The future will interpret the past : what we shall feel will reveal God's motive in what we have felt ; what now is harsh will be attuned ; and that which to-day is fitful, and out of tune, will be brought to the measure of a perfect movement ; and all, at last, assorted and combined, each note distributed upon the proper line, will make the finished and divinely-conceived anthem of our lives.

SABBATH MORNING, JAN. 7, 1872.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—NEED OF AN ATONEMENT, AND WHY NEEDED.

“WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD IS NO REMISSION.”—Heb. ix. 22.

I HAVE been requested many times since last spring, both verbally by members of my own church and by strangers through correspondence, to make a statement of the doctrine of the atonement as held by the evangelical churches, and to set forth, in plain, direct language, the reason and necessity of it as they stand shaped in my own mind. This I will now attempt to do. I do it at this time because it may chance that I shall not by and by have it in my power to lay the statement before you in such a way as shall give you an opportunity of reviewing leisurely and with care what I might advance. It is only when the eye and the ear are both enlisted in her service, and steadying her on either side, that the human understanding moves along the path of knowledge with speed and safety.

It is evident to all, at a glance, that, to a Christian or an honest student of the New Testament, there can be no subject of inquiry equal in interest to this

of the atonement. This doctrine is the centre and sun of our religious system. All other doctrines are only satellites grouped around it. Whatever grandeur of motion they have, the propulsion comes to them from it; whatever radiance illuminates their orbs is only a dim reflection caught from its outstreaming and inexhaustible glory. From the summit of Calvary you overlook the whole field of evangelical truth, as the traveller sees at one sweep of his eye from the summit of a mountain all the circumjacent plains. Whatever a man cannot see when he stands with his arm clasped around the cross, looking out upon human life and up to God's nature, he will never see until he sees "face to face."

There were two obstacles to man's salvation, which made an atonement a necessity. The one arose from his relation to the divine government; the other, from his inherent spiritual condition. The first obstacle was that which the honor of the divine law, that had been openly and defiantly transgressed, opposed, — an obstacle that could not be set aside until some equivalent for that should be found, which, on natural and judicial grounds, would be acceptable to it: the second obstacle was the enmity of the human heart to God.

These were the two obstructions which men's sinfulness had heaved up in their path heavenward. How could they be removed? These were what constituted the awful chasm, along the verge of which such of the race as were not too much debauched to think were running with sharp interrogations; with

tossing of hands, and not seldom quick, piercing cries for help. How could the chasm be bridged? There is nothing sadder nor more suggestive than the patient yet nervous looking of the world for a Saviour long years before he came. They were as those who watch the night through, dying just before the dawn. But God knoweth his own; and such as longed for Christ, and knew him only in their longings, know him now face to face. They lived by the measure of light they had; and now they walk in the light of glory. They were faithful over a few things; and now God has lifted them up, and made them rulers over many things.

You see, my friends, that neither of these two obstacles to man's salvation could or can be removed by man. The obstacle opposed by the law could not, because no repentance and reformation on the part of the criminal could of themselves restore and sustain the honor of it. The law has a claim which the repentance of the transgressor cannot meet. No judge accepts the tears and grief of the arraigned person as satisfactory before the law. It is not in the nature of grief to make legal atonement. The principles of public justice refuse to acknowledge such moods and states of feeling as equivalent to punishment. And who is ready to say that what cannot satisfy a petty police regulation should satisfy divine government? Who is ready to say that God is bound to receive what a city justice cannot for a moment think of accepting as an equivalent for the sentence? What weak and shameful conceptions of the Divine

Being some men, influenced by their prejudices, have! And what can be weaker or more illogical than to insist that God, for the sake of pardoning a few criminals who neither desire pardon, nor would be bettered by it, must disregard every principle of jurisprudence, and conduct his court in such a way, as, were it imitated by your city judges, would exorcise justice, and the very ones appointed to protect it would make law here a by-word of contempt, and place your lives and property at the mercy of murderers and thieves?

I trust that all of you, especially you who are thinking about reforming your lives and becoming Christians, will see that repentance and reformation alone cannot save you. The reason is, (and what is plainer?) because such do not satisfy the law. They do not cover your past transgressions; they do not allow the judge to acquit you. Your position, remember, before God, is that of a *criminal*: you are a *law-breaker*. For years you have been notoriously such. Transgression has been the habit of your life, — so much of a habit, that you do not realize the enormity of individual acts. The law has at last seized hold of you. You are arrested in your conscience. The first question with you, friend, to consider, is, “How can I satisfy the law’s demand?” Never mind about the feelings of the judge; no, nor your own feelings: your feelings will never save you, whatever they are. Ascertain just what is demanded of you by the law, and satisfy it. Until you do this, all other efforts, as you see, however well meant, however earnestly pushed, will be in vain.

But, my hearers, if repentance and reformation cannot sustain and restore the honor of the law, how, seeing that these are the utmost you can do, can you of yourselves remove the obstacle which the law opposes to your salvation? How can you be acquitted when the judge assures you that what you offer as the equivalent of your punishment is not an equivalent? But by so much as you cannot offer what is acceptable yourself, by so much as you cannot remove the obstacle, some one must remove it for you, or it will remain to your dying day.

You all agree with me in this. You have gone with me step by step as we proceeded, and stand essentially in the same position as I occupy; and you see how honest and pertinent is this question: If you cannot save yourselves, and will not allow another to be your savior, how can you be saved? If the law presents a claim against you which you cannot satisfy, and you will permit no one to meet it for you, what will be the consequences?

The second obstacle, which, if I may so speak, God experienced in his endeavors to save offenders against his government from the punishment they deserved, was the enmity of the human heart. The race were not merely offenders, but they were persistent and bitter in their offence. They were so arrogant, so set and determined in their hostility, that they refused every overture of the government looking toward their pardon, and restoration to forfeited rights. This obstacle, also, man can never remove; and the reason is, that enmity will never change it-

self into allegiance. Enmity does not desire change. Filled with it, a man drifts upon the current of his hostility, borne whithersoever it tends. Acidity can never sweeten itself: it must be mingled with and operated upon by other elements, or its bitterness remains. If it is susceptible of growth, its growth is always in multiplication of itself. It changes only to change the degree of its intensity. Granted that there exists a single evil tendency in your heart, my friend; and the statement, that no check, no betterment, will come to you until you are operated upon from without, carries with it the force of a demonstration: for to say that evil will change itself is to say that it will destroy the coherence of its own constitution acting against itself. If the thorn-bush shall ever yield upon the air, and to the hand of man, the fragrance and fruitfulness of the peach, it will be because it has been grafted upon, and its natural qualities overpowered by a new and higher order of productiveness. An infusion of sweeter sap must vitally change the character of its natural circulation or ever it shall reward the nourishing hand.

The obstacle which the death of Christ removed was not, as you see, the lack of disposition on the part of God to save men, as some seem to suppose. Some, even in their prayers, allude to the death of Christ as if it wrought some great change in the feelings of God toward the race; as if it pacified him, and made him more amiable; as if it quickened his mercy, swept the frowns from his brow, and made

it natural for him to smile on us. They seem to think that God was unwilling to save, determined and anxious to punish, until Christ came. They talk as if the atonement was necessary in order to avert the wrath of God as a *personal feeling* from the race, and thus give occasion for that insolent and impious inquiry, "Is God such an implacable being, that his own Son had to immolate himself before he would be appeased?" What an error is this! What saith the Scripture? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." If you would see the love of the Father, look at Calvary. If there is any thing precious in your faith, fellow-Christian, if any thing auspicious in your hope, if the Gospels yield any consolation, if piety a single comfort, remember that you owe it all to your heavenly Father. Christ did not bribe him to love you. He loved us as much before Christ came as he loves us since. Nay, it was his love that gave us Christ. It was his wisdom which devised, as it is his power which applies to our salvation, the atonement plan. No: the death of the Son quickened no previously unfelt pity in the Father's bosom; it wrought no transformation in Jehovah's feelings; it changed no principle of his government; it gave no latent and unexercised sentiment expression. He is no better friend, no truer helper, now, than he would have been had the Saviour never died. Lack of disposition to save on the part of God was not the obstacle to be overcome

Nor, in the second place, was it the literal claims of the penal law which constituted the obstacle. The atonement was not a commercial transaction, — so much paid, so much due : for, if it were, then would it be necessary for us to show that the sufferings of Christ were, in the first place, equal in extent to the sufferings of those whom he redeemed ; that is, that Christ actually suffered as much in his own person as the race itself would have suffered had they been left to bear individually the punishment themselves. But he would be a bold man who should claim ability to analyze the suffering of Christ, and balance it against its equivalent of human agony, such as might come on sinners for punishment of their sins. Again : this theory would make it necessary that Jesus should endure not only the same aggregate amount of suffering as those he redeemed would have borne if not delivered from the law, but also that he should endure the same *kind* of suffering. But this is, in every sense, an impossibility ; because no one who is not a sinner himself can endure the same kind of suffering as the sinner ; and Christ, being sinless, might neither experience remorse nor any other painful result of sin. Thus you see that it was not the literal claim of the law which Christ met. This was not the obstacle he removed. The atonement was not a commercial transaction ; and, when Christ is spoken of as paying our debts, it is not in the literal sense, as I have explained.

“ Well,” I hear you say, “ if neither of these was the obstacle to man’s salvation that Christ removed,

what was the obstacle? Please put it so that I can understand it."

I will try. You remember the story of Darius and Daniel. The illustration is not original with me. You will find it in many books, and perhaps have heard it from the pulpit before. I use it because it is apt. You remember the peculiarity in the Persian polity, which made it impossible for any in the kingdom to change a decree. Once spoken, it must remain. The Persian government resembled the government of God in this respect, — its decrees were unchangeable. It needs infinite wisdom and infinite love to inaugurate such a government. Where a law cannot be changed or withdrawn, it requires omniscience to frame it, else it may prove a curse, and recoil on its maker. This was the case in respect to Darius and Daniel. Darius, instigated by the enemies of Daniel, had made a decree which Daniel, as his foes knew, was in conscience bound to break. He did break it. His transgression was swiftly published to the king, and the transgressor's punishment demanded. Now, Darius loved Daniel, and was loath to order his death. But there was the decree. It had been broken. The king could not set it aside. It was unchangeable. He could not fly in the face of the most cherished, most revered, most insisted on, principle of his government. Observe the dilemma, — the obstacle to Daniel's pardon. It was not lack of desire on the part of the king: every desire of his heart was to save him. It was not because he was hard-hearted: every sentiment of his bosom was

only of mercy. What, then, *was* the obstacle? It was this: *It was the want of an honorable medium for the expression of mercy, consistent with the character of the government and the honor of the law.* He wanted to pardon; but *how* could he pardon? He “set his heart on delivering;” but *how* could he deliver? There was no way in which his mercy might be exercised without doing violence to the decree. There was no medium through which love might find expression without disregard of the law. All day, the kind-hearted king meditated; yea, to the going-down of the sun, he studied how to deliver Daniel; but all in vain. He could find no equivalent, which, being substituted in the place of Daniel’s death, would meet the demand of the unchangeable law, and yet release the condemned. But, my hearers, behold now the excellence of God over men. Adore the wisdom which is never baffled, never inadequate.

How accurately, in respect to essentials, does this historic incident illustrate the atonement! Had Daniel been guilty, the parallel would have been complete. The race had transgressed. An unchangeable decree had gone forth, that the transgressors should die. The whole universe had heard it. Heaven and hell both felt that the honor of the law was at stake. Still God loved the race; his heart yearned over them in mercy; he longed to save. But there stood the law: it had been transgressed. Inflexible, and inflexibly just, it demanded its due. As in the case of Darius, the obstacle was not the lack of disposition, but of a *medium* through which mercy might

be expressed consistent with the demand of the law. What was needed was an equivalent before the law to the death of the condemned, — a substitution equally honorable and satisfactory to it. Darius searched in vain. To the going-down of the sun he labored to no purpose: he could find no equivalent. But God was not to be thwarted in his benevolent intentions. He looked into his own fold, and found there a “Lamb” of burnt-offering. In Christ, in his life and death, the law beheld and acknowledged an equivalent. If he would take the place of the condemned, if he would bear the penalty in their behalf, the demand of the law would be fully met, and the obstacle that the decree offered to man’s pardon be removed.

It was removed: an equivalent had been found. God might now pardon, and not contradict himself. Angels saw the glorious possibility it opened up to the race, and congratulated the earth with celestial song. They did not and could not foresee that man would refuse to be at peace with God. Sympathetic with human betterment as they were, they never suspected, they never dreamed, that any would reject the salvation made possible at such a sacrifice. They never imagined, friend, that you would refuse a pardon which God had been at such effort and cost to offer you: if they had, astonishment, grief, and righteous indignation, would have checked their jubilant flight, and silenced their happy tongues in mid-utterance of their joyful song.

Observe and fix well in mind what the atonement, the death of Christ, did, and what it did not do. It

did not pardon any one : it only made it possible for God to pardon. It did not remove the second obstacle to man's salvation (which, you remember, I said was the enmity of the human heart) ; for it left the human heart unchanged. Men hated God as bitterly after Christ died as they did before. The natural heart is as rebellious to-day as it ever was. But it did do this : it removed the first obstacle ; viz., the opposition which the transgressed law offered to man's salvation. It provided a *medium* through which God could express his mercy to us, and not disregard his own decrees. It furnished to the law an equivalent to the punishment of the criminal, and hence made it possible for God to remain "just, and yet justify the unjust." So far, it is a success. Whether a single soul is saved or not, the atonement is not a failure. If any are saved, it is because, by the exercise of his wisdom, God has taken the obstacles out of the way. If any are lost, it is not because the hindrances remain unremoved, but because they themselves refuse to be benefited by the removal. The obstructions which your own sins heave up in your path are removed, and a free, open way has been for years inviting you to traverse it toward heaven. Who beside yourselves are to be blamed if you refuse to walk therein ?

Allow me at this point to remark briefly upon the relation of the atonement to the pardoning power.

Some men say, as you know, that Christ having died, an atonement having been made, therefore God is now compelled to pardon. Salvation, being

purchased in Christ, is now something *due* to the race. This and kindred errors spring from a confused idea of what the death of Christ did and did not accomplish, and especially of its relation to the exercise of the pardoning power. Now, the death of Christ accomplished simply this: it answered the ends of a good government in such a way that the government was at *liberty to pardon offenders in what way, and on what terms, it might please.*

I cannot better illustrate this point than by a reference to our late national experiences.

What did the Union armies accomplish? that is, in what position did their achievements put the government? Why, eminently this: they put the government in a position to pardon without loss of honor. Before the rebellion was suppressed, when it stood in successful hostility to the government, government was in no position to make overtures. The very success of the rebellion was the obstacle in the way of the exercise of the pardoning power. To extend pardon to such as were in successful and defiant revolt was but an idle effort, — an exhibition of weakness, calculated to call forth derision and multiplied hostility. But when the rebellion was overthrown; when its armies were scattered, its chief a prisoner, its president a fugitive, its weakness confessed; when the court to which they had appealed had decided against them; when they yielded themselves up, and took the position of defeated parties, — then it was that the government might, with honor to itself, extend pardon; then, without loss of dig-

nity, and a fair prospect of doing good, it might make merciful overtures.

But is there any one here who will say, that, because the government *might* do this, it was *bound* to do it? Is there any one who will claim that the disloyal South had any *claim* upon the government's mercy? Or will any one say that the war for the Union, the perpetuation of the government, the vindication of national authority, was all in vain, unless all the rebels were pardoned, and restored to their former rights and privileges? No: the war was a success if not a rebel should be converted to loyalty. If, through their persistent hostility, not one had accepted the merciful overtures of the government, still would the war find ample vindication. If every offer the nation might make should be rejected, still its exhibition of mercy would not be lost.

Like to this, as I conceive, is the relation of the atonement to the government of God, and its attitude toward a rebellious race. . The death of Christ put no necessity on God to forgive. So with the national government: how many should be forgiven, what ones should be forgiven, what evidence should be demanded to show that any were fit subjects of leniency, were matters over which the rebels themselves had no control. Theirs was not the part of dictation, — of telling the government what it must and must not do, insisting on a right to be forgiven and restored. Rights! — the rebellious have no rights. They forfeit before the law all rights and privileges when they go into rebellion. Is there a man here, in

moral rebellion to any law of God, who can demand pardon of God as a right? No. Because a government has by its own efforts removed the obstacle which forbade the exercise of the pardoning power, and, against every endeavor of those for whom it wrought, made it possible to grant pardon, a pretty position truly is it to take, that therefore it is *bound to pardon!* There is, therefore, as you all see, no ground for such a theory as some hold. God is no more bound to pardon a man now than he would be if the Saviour had never died. Salvation is not a debt due us, but a "free gift," to which we have not the shadow of a claim. The death of Christ simply removed one of the two obstacles in the way of mercy, and so far made it possible for mercy to be exercised: this, and nothing more. Whether you will be forgiven depends upon the state of your feelings toward the government of God. If God, looking into your heart, sees that it has repented of its rebellion, has thrown down its arms and left the ranks of his enemies, and is desirous of renewing its loyal relations to him, he will, upon the basis of that change in you, doubtless make out a pardon, and restore you to the privileges of heavenly citizenship. But if he looks, and sees in you nothing but hostility and indifference, absence of respect for his person, and reverence for his law, and a desire to continue in your rebellion, you will go down to your house as you came up, an unpardoned rebel before God. Nor will the atonement suffer loss because of your loss: whether you are saved or not, whether any in the

race be saved or not, the death of Christ, in satisfaction of divine law, to vindicate divine authority, to make salvation possible, to reveal the love of God and the wisdom of the Most High, will remain the marvel and admiration of the universe. Although every Southerner had refused to take the oath of allegiance, yet the war in defence of the government would not have been a failure: neither our money would have been lavished, nor our blood shed, in vain. And so, though not a human soul had accepted the provision of the atonement, the atonement would not have been a failure. Through it the universe would have seen the nature of God as never before revealed. Through it the principles of divine government were enunciated, and an appeal made to man,—an opportunity given to the race such as might silence all whispers and cavil forever.

The atonement is thus seen to be, not the *procuring cause* of salvation, but the *medium* through which it is secured. The *love of God* is the *cause*, and the only cause, of salvation to any; and the death of Christ is the medium through which he can, in a way honorable to the law, express that love to our redemption. There is not a man, there is not a woman, there is not a youth, — I care not how widely you have wandered, I care not how deeply you have sinned, nor how strong has been your rebellion, — in this audience, at this moment, to whom God in his love does not come and offer forgiveness through the blood of Christ. “Only drop your hostility, only forego your rebellion, only throw down your arms, only utter a cry, only make a

sign," he says, "and I will pardon you here and now." This is the love of God to you, my hearer. Was there ever love like unto it? Think of your life, — your life of neglect, your life of indifference, your life of opposition, — and then tell me if you have ever known in father or mother, in husband or wife, in any friend, living or dead, a love to be compared with this love. There are faces back of me, over which, as they sleep, the evergreens wave to-day. There are faces which nightly by the side of couches, and in the flush of morning, are lifted to heaven for me in prayer; they express for me all that the human heart may feel of solicitude and love: yet in the face of Him, who lifteth the light of his countenance upon me as I speak, I behold the expression of a love deeper, a tenderness more tender, a longing more intense, than ever heart of flesh may feel, or the voice and eye of man or woman express. If all these voices should be hushed, all these faces averted, all these eyes turned away, the love of God for me would remain unchanged and unchangeable. By the ministrations of it while I lived, I should find all needed consolation, and at death be folded in the embrace of its arms forever.

As it is to me, so is it to you all. You may reject its overtures to-day; but it will entreat only the more at some future time. You may turn your backs upon its offer of pardon, and go from this church hardened and untouched; but it will go with you all the same. It will follow you to your homes; it will accompany

you to your chambers ; it will stand by you at your places of business : wherever you are it will be, ever repeating, as you reject, its offer, — pardon of all your sins through the blood of Jesus. Who in this assembly hears this offer now ? Who is about to decide ? What is it you decide ? Do you reject it ? Do you accept it ? Who here accepts it ?

“ Without the shedding of blood is no remission.” Thank God the blood was shed ! Whose blood ? The blood of the dying Saviour. It flowed from those blessed hands, through which the spikes were driven ; from that celestial brow, around which the thorny crown, in cruel mockery, was tightly set ; from those feet, the sound of whose coming had brought joy to the mourner, and life to the dead ; and from that saintly side, within which the heart of tender, deep, universal love for man was beating. O heart that beat for me ! O love that yearned for mine ! O hands whose touch in benediction bringeth perfect peace ! Saviour of men, we love thee ! The sceptic may laugh ; but his laughter can never dim this everlasting rainbow in our sky. The scoffer may scoff ; but we will drown his scoffing in the volume of our uplifted praise. Thy name shall be our watchword. It shall be our battle-cry. Error shall go down before us as we peal it forth. We will write it on the front of our stores. It shall be traced in letters of light in the rooms where we repose. At waking, our eyes shall see it ; and, when we sink to sleep, its rays shall guide our spirits to their slumber. In life it

shall be our star ; and death itself, shone on by its full radiance, shall lose the dreadful shadow which the unforgiven see upon his countenance, and seem, to us whose sins are washed away by the all-cleansing blood, like a white angel sent forth from God.

SABBATH MORNING, JAN. 14, 1872.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—NEED OF AN ATONEMENT, AND WHY NEEDED.

“WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD IS NO REMISSION.”—Heb. ix. 22.

LAST sabbath, you remember, I discussed the obstacle which man's transgression of the law opposed to his salvation, and how it was removed by the death of Christ. You remember we showed that it was not the lack of a disposition on the part of God, nor the literal claims of the divine law, which constituted the obstacle, but the lack of a medium through which God might express his mercy without disregarding the claims of the law. As in the case of Darius and Daniel, the question was, “What is an equivalent, before the law, of the criminal's punishment?” The Persian monarch, although he sought until the going-down of the sun, could find no equivalent, which, being substituted in the place of the transgressor's punishment, might answer the same end, and make it possible for a pardon to be issued. But God, more excellent in wisdom than man, was equal to the emergency. He looked into his own fold, and there found a Lamb without spot or blemish,

whose sacrifice the law could accept as an equivalent, and thus make it possible for God to extend pardon to transgressors without disregard of his own decree ; and thus the death of Christ made it possible for God to be "just, and yet the justifier of the unjust."

In this manner, then, was the first of the two obstacles in the way of our salvation removed. The obstruction which man's transgression to divine law had heaved up in his path heavenward was swept away. Heaven now, as a city whose gates are ever open, lay ahead of him ; and up to its shining entrances ran a straight and unimpeded path. But would man walk in it? That was the question which remained. The moment the breath went out of Christ as he hung upon the cross, that very moment God could offer pardon to man ; that very moment he did offer it. But would man accept it? No longer might any speculate what were the feelings of God toward the race. In Christ his love and desire to save were advertised beyond mistake. The dying cry of the Only-Begotten not only rent the veil of the temple ; it parted the investiture which had concealed the character of God : and not only men, but angels, for the first time, saw what they had long desired to look into. Never more might the universe be in doubt as to the nature of its great Head. In the blood of Jesus, the love, the tenderness, the pity, of the Father, are seen to flow in a perpetual tide. When the darkness of the crucifixion melted away, the world beheld the nature of God as our eyes behold an undraped column at noon-

day: above, the sky was cloudless; and the light which bathed it from apex to base was intense, fadeless, and serene.

The first part of the problem was now and thus solved. How God felt, the world knew; how man felt, it was yet to discover. The first obstacle to salvation was removed: the second remained.

The second obstacle, I say, — the enmity of the human heart, — remained. The death of Christ wrought no change in man. He gazed with eyes unlighted, with set and dogged look, at the exhibition of the cross. The heaven-sent Saviour, who came to bear the punishment of his sins, was hooted at and denounced while he lived, and gibed and jeered at as he expired. Man's heart remained *unchanged*. Rebel still against God's law, he gloried in his rebellion. He refused all overtures of mercy. He scoffed at pardon, or, if he did not scoff, treated God's solicitude with cool and studied indifference. But why employ the *past* tense. Why say man *did* it? Rather let me say man *does*; for, in describing what was, do I not also describe what is? Need I go out of this audience for subjects from which to sketch the portrait of neglect and cool indifference to God's merciful inclination to man? Are there not, here and now, in this room, men and women who present in living form and feature the very face and figure of this spiritual carelessness and unconcern? Are there not here and there persons in this congregation who feel themselves to be plain, undeniable proof and evidence of what we claim? In your own hearts, my hearers,

behold the breathing, animate demonstration of the truth, that although Christ has died, although heaven has done its utmost to save, although in infinite mercy God has removed by the death of Christ the first obstacle to your salvation, yet the second obstacle — the wickedness of your own hearts — lifts between you and hope its huge impediment still. Behold and realize to-day what the impediment to your salvation is. It is not the harshness nor the strictness of God, nor the hardness of the terms prescribed, nor justice, which has no pity. No: it is none of these. If you are lost, it will not be owing to these. Not from any thing outside do you need deliverance. The deliverance you need, my friend, is deliverance from *yourself*. You are your own impediment, and the only impediment there is between you and heaven. You lack not the offer of pardon from the pardoning power: that offer is made you; in His name I make it now. What you lack, friend, is a *desire* to be pardoned. You will not accept forgiveness; and the lack of this *desire* is now what constitutes the only impediment between you and heaven, and blinds your eyes to all the radiant and outstreaming glories of it. Alas that men called learned, in the face of these facts, should continue to teach that there is no enmity in man's heart to God, and no persistent rebellion to his laws; no reason why any should worry themselves concerning their state and condition, when life and breath, and all these gracious offers of pardon, have passed away forever!

Now, before we proceed to discuss how God,

through the atonement, seeks to remove this, — the second obstacle to our salvation, — let us pause a moment, and interject a few explanatory remarks. Before we discuss *how* this enmity to God in the human heart can be removed, let us get a clear conception as to the need of its removal; for here logically comes in the consideration of the new birth, or what is more often called a “change of heart.”

Now, no government by an official act can make a disloyal subject loyal. Suppose that, during the rebellion, when it was in all its arrogance and power, our government at Washington had issued a proclamation of pardon to every rebel, from the general-in-chief down to the private in the ranks: would that proclamation of pardon have made a single rebel less rebellious? Would it have taken the spirit of revolt, of enmity, out of a single heart, and supplanted it with the spirit of loyalty and love? “Of course not,” you say. “But why?” I inquire. “Because,” you respond, in the very words I used at the start, “no government can by such an official act change the feelings of its subjects.” So, then, we agree in this, — that the presence of the strongest desire on the part of the government to have its subjects loyal does not make them loyal; nor is it possible for that government, by any act or effort, to take discontent and enmity out of the heart of those who are filled with such feelings. And the reason is, because you cannot legislate feelings into men. You cannot by official acts make enemies friendly. You cannot, at will, change hatred to love.

But we all agree, furthermore, in this, — that such a change must take place in the hearts of the rebellious or ever it is safe or practicable for the government to admit them to share in its honors and service. It would be governmental suicide to permit the disloyal and hostile portion of its subjects to hold sway and power; and especially would it be destructive and suicidal if the hostile party hated not merely the government itself, but more bitterly yet the principles on which the government was founded. The claim, for instance, which the nation set up and insisted on, the idea upon which all our reconstruction acts were based, was this, — that the several State governments south should be constructed on a loyal basis, and administered by loyal men. The disloyal, the hostile, the unrepentant rebels, as we all insisted, and rightly too, were in such a state of mind as to disqualify them from sharing in the service and emoluments of public affairs. The nation insisted that no unchanged, unrepentant rebel should be admitted to a place in the government. Pardon should be extended only on the evidence of repentance and returning loyalty. This principle was correct. The obstacle in the way of the restoration of the South to forfeited rights and forgiveness was, as we all know, not harshness on the part of the government, not a disinclination to forgive, not because it was not possible for it to forgive; but the obstacle, the only obstacle, was the unrepentant attitude and refusal on the part of the South to be pardoned.

The analogy between these, in their relation to our

government, and those who remain impenitent before the government of God, is very close. By the death of Christ, God is able to extend pardon to all. He does extend it; but many refuse. Now, God cannot *legislate* holy affections into a sinner's heart, any more than Congress could loyal affections into a Southern rebel. God cannot save a man against his will and desire. What is wanted, therefore, on the part of man, is a desire to be saved. What you need is a change of feeling toward God, my friend. Your present indifference needs to be supplanted with interest; your present opposition, with concurrence; your refusal, with assent; your rejection, with acceptance. This, then, you see, is the obstacle to your salvation, — you are in no state of feeling to accept it. Observe how free this is from mysticism. How clearly you can perceive why you are not saved, if you shall not be! Turn your eye inward, and see in yourself the only obstacle between you and heaven.

It seems to me that I could never pardon some preachers for making this subject so mysterious. Regeneration, or the removal of the second obstacle to man's salvation, is lifted by some religious teachers far into the clouds which float along the extremest boundary of human vision. They cover it up with so many fine definitions, they swathe it in so many texts of Scripture, they bewilder the hearer with so many vehement exhortations, that the mind of an angel would be befogged, and the audience go away laboring under certain evangelical impressions

it is true, but in reality no wiser ; seeing no more clearly the real point than they did the last time they were inundated by such a torrent of words.

Now, there is, in fact, no more difficulty in understanding this second obstacle to salvation than the first. States and dispositions of heart are no more mysterious than the acts which flow from them. There is not an individual here who is not able to say whether he is ready now to accept forgiveness of his sins or not. If he is not ready, whether from this cause or that, there is not a man here who does not see just why he is not forgiven : it is because he prefers not to be. There is no mysticism about it ; and any man, whether in his sermons or prayers, who makes the need of a change of heart or feelings mysterious, throws a mystery around it which springs only from his own ignorance.

Now, my hearers, you understand fully what the second obstacle to man's salvation is, — the enmity of the human heart. You see that the death of Christ did not remove it, but that it exists the same as ever to-day ; that, while it so exists in your heart, it not only prevents you from applying for pardon, but also prevents God from granting it ; and hence there was, after the death of Christ, a need that some special agency should be established, by the workings of which the second obstacle should be removed. And at this point I say, that the same love, which, by the death of Christ, removed the first obstacle to our pardon, such as our transgression of the law presented, removed also the second, such as our inherent

wickedness and hostility to God presented. Of this I will now proceed to speak.

But let me, in the first place, remark, that God accomplishes his ends, not by the exercise of arbitrary power, but through the agency of *means*.

The atonement is not an exhibition of omnipotence ; it is not to be considered as the highest demonstration of power : it is to be regarded, rather, as a *provision*, a *medium*, an *expedient* ; the result and proof of infinite wisdom, rather than of might. At the crucifixion, God did not lift the world, as on the crest of a wave, to the desired altitude, and on that level roll the generations onward. He started a current of holy influences rather, upon which the race was to be gradually lifted, and urged along as ships which sail an ever-deepening channel are lifted and impelled by tides which swell and gather volume as they flow. The death of Christ, substituted before the law in the place of man's proper punishment, was the means he introduced to remove the first obstacle to our salvation. So accustom yourselves to regard it, my hearers. In the cross of the Son behold the wisdom of the Father. Consider it, not as an arbitrary, isolated act, but as a device, a provision, to extricate the race from the embarrassment and woe of their sinful position in a way honorable to the Deity, and not humiliating to man. Regard the death of Christ in its connections also. It stands not alone. It is not the temple : it is the corner-stone upon which the whole temple, fitly framed together, is builded. It is the central and pre-eminent sun of the gospel system ;

but around it many other spheres, perfect and full-orbed, revolve, no less brilliant and worthy of admiration because they shine with a radiance borrowed from the central globe. I would not in an ignorant and indiscriminating piety give to the Son that homage which belongs to the Spirit. I would not remember Him who intercedes in heaven to the exclusion of Him who operates on the earth. I would not close my eyes, as one in trance, and dream of Him whom I hope to see by and by face to face, thereby making myself unable to see Him who stands by my very side. I need the Advocate; but do I less need the Comforter? I need the blood; but do I less need the quickening and applying Spirit? I need the mediation, the atoning efficacy, of Christ; but need I less the "seal and witness" of the Holy Ghost? No! In the clear blue above me I suspend the twain, which, like two stars, each at its fullest orb, equal in radiant girth, lambent and intense, commingle their rays, and together light my pathway toward that city over which they do and shall forever shine.

Nor would I, as some seem to do, lose sight of the part man has to play in the atonement scheme. Men are not tossed about on the tides of evil like so many pieces of precious wood, which God, through the atonement, collects, and restores to their former position in the vast frame of universal affairs from which they have slipped. Man is an agent. Man is an elector. With him, by an indestructible endowment, is the power to act and choose. Acceptance and refusal are, and must ever be, his. This is what I

meant, when I said, a moment ago, that the atonement scheme does not humiliate man. God respects his own creation, and disturbs not its functional prerogatives. The atonement enslaves and enervates no man. It makes no attempt to rob man of his free agency : it puts no gag into his mouth, no fetter on his thought, no check upon his propelling powers. God is no tyrant: he wishes no unwilling subjects. There is not a man or woman here compelled, beyond the compulsion of conscience and reason, to accept his offer. Whether you love him or not, you must at least, all of you, admire the manner in which he invites you to love him. "Come," he says, "let us *reason* together." Is there any compulsion, any tyranny, in *that*? "*Choose* ye this day whom ye will serve: if the Lord is God, follow him; if Baal, follow him." How considerate that is! how it honors your judgment! how it appeals to your power of proper decision! I desire that each of you should understand that the system of theology I preach is not a system of ropes and fetters to bind and drag you with; it is not a system of dictation, of gags and withs. I preach to you as I would argue before a jury. Mine is the duty of explanation, entreaty; yours to choose and decide. No slander was ever more palpably such than the assertion, that the evangelical religion is a religion of feeling independent of intellect; that the orthodox system ostracizes reason; that its churches allow no latitude of opinion. Yet as a lie repeated is at last a lie believed, so, by constant reiteration, this assertion has become

stamped into the belief of many. It has no truth in fact. Wherein we differ from some is in this, — some suppose that there can be no latitude of opinion in religion while there is any thing to have an opinion upon ; and so they sweep Christ out of Christianity, and the Bible out of theology, and then, when they have nothing to differ upon, call their blank negation liberality of opinion, and plume themselves upon thinking as they please after they have buried under a flat denial all that is really worth thinking upon. Why, my hearers, how can the atonement be subversive of intellect, when, in all its appeals, it leaves every thing to the decision of intellect ? when it is, from beginning to end, a system of *means*, a system of persuasion, a system of entreaty, ignoring at every point, and in I care not what emergency, all compulsion, all force, all violence ?

But to return. I said that the second obstacle, as the first, was removed by the use of *means*. The thing needed, you remember, was a disposition on the part of man to *be* saved. What stood in the way was the indifference and opposition of the human heart to accept the terms of pardon proposed. Let us now ascertain by what means God seeks to remove this indifference and opposition.

There are then, I remark, three means employed, all of which, independent of or connected with each other, are calculated to meet the end proposed. The three may be thus set in order : —

1. The death of Christ as a subject of reflection.
2. The ministry of the word as a system of inducements.

3. The influence of the Holy Ghost.

Time only remains for me to speak of the first of these three means calculated to remove the enmity of the human heart to God ; viz., the death of Christ as a subject of reflection.

There is something impressive and solemn in the thought of death. When life is surrendered from principle ; when a man voluntarily yields it up in accordance with his convictions of duty, or from the promptings of a noble, humane impulse to save, — the world pays its universal homage to his name. The list of martyrs is long ; and the number of those who died for human weal is beyond count. The pages of history are fragrant with the odor of their deeds. From the record of their lives the student draws his noblest aspirations ; and their elegy sounds with more of an heroic than of a funereal strain, and with an ever-accumulating swell. It betters a man to pause occasionally, and think of the past ; of the thousands, not unknown to fame, who have died in battle that Liberty might have a foothold on the earth, and upon the elevation of whose graves, as upon a sure foundation, she has at last builded her temple ; of those other thousands whose names have faded like extinguished stars from the firmament of human knowledge, and yet whose glory, like beams of light whose far-distant source has fallen, add to the general illumination of the sky.

There is not a name of men and women back of me, who died thus, to which I am not bound in gratitude. There is not a person in all that vast array, who made

one unselfish effort for knowledge, one heroic endeavor for liberty, who endured a single sacrifice for principle, to whom I am not held in debt. From the silence of graves long forgotten, from the depth of dungeons — now fortunately in ruins — where they expired, they put forth their eloquent and impressive claim; and my heart, in its every beat of joy and peace and hope, acknowledges its gratitude. But is there not a name back of me more radiant than all names? Is there not an act which is to the constellated deeds of history what the sun is to the stars when he rises with far-reaching and upstreaming glory out of the east? Is there not one face, which, unseen by us all, has nevertheless imprinted itself with an indelible impress upon the tablet of our minds? It is the name and face of Jesus, and the act is his death for us on Calvary. It was there that hope was born for a dying race. It was there that peace, which passeth understanding, became a component and fragrant part of the moral atmosphere, which men no sooner inhaled than their feverish tossings and murmurs ceased, and they found the long-sought rest. It was then and there, my hearer, stranger or friend, that a new and glorious possibility was opened up to you and me; and before us, to-day, this possibility of pardon of all our sins, and reconciliation with God, from whom we became estranged, stretches its avenue of promise, and the glory of the city into which it leads invites us to enter. Will you enter? Let your mind in this closing moment run backward along the line of the centuries. How

quickly your thought has flashed itself across the gulf of nineteen hundred years! Now take your stand on Calvary, and crowding closely to the foot of the cross, unnoticed amid the darkness by the soldiery, look upward into the face of your dying Lord. Look well at that face. Why? Because it is the face of the only man who ever died for his *foes*. Standing there, say, knowing that you speak with the accuracy of fact, "This, then, is the man who died for *me*; this is he who voluntarily, out of love for me, took my place before the law, and hangs here suffering the sufferings which I should suffer, dying that I may live. Never was love like unto this; never a death like unto thine, my Saviour." Is there a man or woman here, whose heart is not hardened beyond the susceptibility of gratitude, not willing, nay, who does not rejoice, to say, as did the sceptical but convinced Thomas, "My Lord and my God"?

"Without the shedding of blood is no remission." Let our thoughts, like a song, come back to the melody of the opening note. At the cross we stood when we began; and now, at the close, we group ourselves, hand linked in hand, around the same. Guilty as we are, it is our only hope. Thank God, it is a perfect hope! Let me but clasp it with my arm; let me but touch it with my hand; let me but see it even; let me but send a pleading glance, in dying, toward it,—and the petition of that silent, that unuttered trust, shall bring salvation to my soul. O friends! it takes age; it takes moral failure; it takes the knowledge of multiplying sinfulness; it

takes the bitter consciousness which living brings; the self-mistrust, the self-conviction, tearful and full of foreboding, which cannot lift even its eyes toward heaven, but beats upon the breast, and cries, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!"—it takes all this, I say, to make one realize the value, the necessity, the sweet blessedness, of the cross. If there is one that loves me here, if there is one that trusts me, if there is one whose ears are open to my voice, I say, My friend, come here and stand with me beside and underneath the cross, and we will hold our sinfulness up; we will unfold all our lives; we will open up all our inmost thoughts, feeling as if the eyes of heaven looked through it, and the voice of God was in it, and hear what it will say. What does it say? Say? It says, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." And what shall we respond? Respond? "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

SABBATH MORNING, JAN. 21, 1872.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO SEND THE GOSPEL TO HEATHEN LANDS.*

“THE ENTRANCE OF THY WORDS GIVETH LIGHT.”—Ps. cxix. 130.

THERE is nothing so gracious in nature, nothing so essential, as light. Its offices are manifold, its benefits beyond enumeration. It came into our atmosphere at the command of God, and its coming marked the first epoch in creation. Until it came, the earth was without form, and void. Darkness was upon the face of the deep. The earth was as a child conceived, but not born. It was a world in embryo: it existed in germinal condition. The elementary forces were there, but unconnected, and without form. The presence of God must be felt among them before they would assume their proper proportions and become instinct with life. And so God caused his Spirit to move upon the face of the waters; and a voice went forth through the darkness, at the sound of which the darkness faded, and light was. And God saw the light, and it was good.

* Preached on the occasion of the annual collection for the Foreign Board.

The Bible is the word of God. In it whatever he has spoken to man is recorded. In it are revealed the wisdom and the love of Heaven toward men. It is to men in their spiritual relation what the sun itself is to nature. Light and all profitable germination result from its presence. The analogy is so close, that the inspired writers have used it in many places to describe its power and benevolent action among men. The word "light" is frequently employed to denote the blessings in the kingdom of grace. The rank that it holds in inspired language is seen when you recall how closely it has been associated with the Saviour. Christ is called by John the "Light of the world." It was chosen by Jesus himself to denote that which is most expressive of piety, when he charged his disciples "that their light should shine before men." The sweetest of all prayers, as it often seems to us amid darkness, is the supplication, that "God would lift up the light of his countenance upon us." In all languages, even in heathen tongues, it is universally used to express joy and gladness and prosperity. It is, as you see, a word of dignity and grace; a word of beautiful and noble use; a word never associated with vice and suffering and pain; a word honored of God and man; a word symbolic only of blessings. Does the Bible deserve so noble an epithet? What does it do, what does it introduce among men, that we should assent to the assertion of the text, and say, that the entrance of the Word giveth light? I will briefly point out to you what it accomplishes.

And, in the first place, it produces a great change.

This change is not realized by us, because we do not go far enough back in the history of nations to appreciate it, to note the changes produced by its introduction. If I say that it underlies our civilization, that it is the parent of intellectual activity as we behold it to-day, your minds instantly revert to France, or to some people among whom the word of God is not credited, where its inspiration is little felt; and you say, "Instead of the Bible being the source of civilization, the nurse of arts, the handmaid of science, the fact is, that the most civilized, the most refined nation in the world does not accept the Bible as God's revelation: it does not enter as a power into their daily life." And that would be apparently true, and yet in reality false. It is a superficial statement. It does not cover the whole ground. Go back to the time when France was not France, but Gaul; when the land was not the home of a civilized, but of a barbarous people; when, in the place of a nation composed of a homogeneous race, there were only savage tribes, rude, ignorant, and debased; when modern France—the France you think of when I speak of the Bible as underlying all its civilization—existed only in its basal elements, only in chaotic state, just as the world existed ere the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters,—go back to this period, I say, and see if it was not the entrance of God's word among those heathen tribes that brought light. What magnetic power was it that drew all those many tribes together, and held

them by its attraction in one compact mass? What first planted letters in that Gallic soil, since too vain and proud to acknowledge the hand that first made it fertile? In whose name were her earliest architectural attempts undertaken? On what altars did her poesy first light her feeble fires? Who trained her children first to sing? I say, speaking with the accuracy of history, that France owes her birth as a nation, owes the birth of her arts and literature and culture, to the Bible. As with England and Scotland and Germany, it was the introduction of Christianity, bringing in its train civilization, with all the blessings it includes, which gave existence to France, rescuing her land and people from gross barbarism. Well would it have been for France had she remembered her early obligations to the Bible, and walked more strictly in the path that it points out alike to nations and to men. She bleeds to-day, and there is no balm for her wounds; for the balm she needs, and might have had, she has for years proudly and scornfully rejected.

You see, all of you, that, if you would properly measure the value of the Bible to a nation, you must study the question historically. You must not look at it as it is, but as it was in contrast with what it is. You must not look at the result, but search for the causes that produced the result. And, looking at them in this light, I say that France and England and Germany, and every civilized nation on the face of the earth to-day, owe as much more to the Bible than the Sandwich-Islanders do as their civilization is

fuller and richer than theirs. There never was a ruder, coarser, more savage race under heaven than that race from which we derive our origin,—the Anglo-Saxon. A fierce, barbarous stock it was, sinewy, lithe, and supple, but with the instincts of a tiger and the fierceness of a wild boar,—a race whose very mirth was grim and horrid; whose joy was the joy of an untamed passion for bloodshed; whose revelry was like the feast of vultures; and whose highest idea of heaven was a prolonged carousal, at which they should be served by those whom they had enslaved by their victories, and drink their wine from the skulls of their enemies. Into such a wild, gnarled, and acrid stock the gospel slip was inserted. It thrived, demonstrating its divine energy by its growth. It expelled the old bitterness, supplanting it by a sweeter sap. And where will you find in all the earth another tree so tall and shapely, so fragrant with blossoms, so laden with fruitfulness, as is this of ours, which the Word and Spirit of God have brought forth from the old Saxon trunk? The truest judgment, the widest charity, the noblest impulses, come from those who recall what their ancestors were. None other can realize what they owe to the Word of God.

The same difficulty meets one in his attempt to set forth what we owe individually to the Bible. The magnitude of the blessing makes a full appreciation impossible. Deprivation is, in some cases, the only source of knowledge touching the value of what we have enjoyed. The preciousness of liberty is never

felt until we are curtailed in our freedom. One day of blindness could alone teach us how much of our happiness and usefulness is due to the light. Pain and weakness must be felt before we can appreciate health. Now, this is eminently true touching our feeling as to the benefits we have derived from the Bible. We were born in a Christian land, where the customs, habits, intellectual state, and social and moral conditions, are all Christian. All knowledge comes to us by comparison; and we who have lived in this country, never visited heathen lands, never seen how much like brutes, and how little like human beings, their peoples are, — we cannot measure the blessings we enjoy. The most common and essential institutions, the most ennobling conceptions of our lives, are all, unnoted as they are by us, offshoots of the Bible. Home is a Bible gift; and we all owe more to home influence than to any other. It did more to shape our lives, mould our minds, form our habits, discipline our powers, and make possible that measure of success we have attained in life, than any of us can estimate. The full-grown tree forgets the weakness and exposed condition of its early state: it forgets that it was braced and supported, fenced from danger, and shielded from violence; forgets that there was a time when the care and pressure of one hand directed it, and made all its growing forces go out in right directions. And yet the tree owes to that early training all its symmetry, and the full rounded expression of its life. So it is with us. We have outgrown the home care, the home contact. We stand

strong, well braced, towering in all the strength and altitude of independent, individual life ; but we have not outgrown the home influence. We see it no longer in the growth ; but we do see it in the result of our life. It is just so with every man in relation to his mother. There was a time when “mother” meant literally every thing to us. We were in every thing dependent upon her. She fed us ; she clothed us ; she taught us ; she corrected our faults, encouraged our virtues. We were shaped by her power as the plastic model is shaped by the careful touch of the artist. We did not appreciate her influence then : we have grown to understand it better since. We all know, that beyond all effort of ours, beyond all skill, beyond all our industry, we owe the happiness and influence of our lives to those influences that were around us in infancy and youth. Through the apprehension of what you owe to the home influence and maternal influence, see how much you owe to the influence of the Bible. It was the Bible, remember to-day, that gave them both to you ; that made home represent something more than a locality, and “mother” more than a name. It was religion which clothed these with moral significance, and enabled them to minister to the high necessities of your natures. Go to lands where the Bible is unknown, and what does home mean ? Compare the influence of a heathen mother to the influence of a Christian mother upon her children. Had the providence of birth located you in India instead of America, in Ceylon instead of New England, what,

intellectually and morally, would you have been to-day? Study the contrast a moment; and let a correct understanding of these things show you your indebtedness to this book, touching which millions of human beings, as immortal as you, know absolutely nothing. Say, in view of these things, whether it is a mere sentiment which has urged this church for sixty years to come together, and in gratitude to God, and in acknowledgment of what they owe to the Scriptures, to contribute of their substance that the Bible may go abroad, and be sent on its beneficent mission to the remotest corner of the globe.

These are but the material benefits you have derived from the Bible; and how vast, how multiform, they are, you can judge. But this is the least use that it serves. The material and civil advantages that attend its introduction among a people are as nothing beside the spiritual blessings it confers. They are only incidental, — merely springs and channels fed by the one noble current of religious emotion and experience on which the hopes of man as an immortal being float. The true use of the Bible, or of any agent or influence to man, is that which relates to his soul; which brings the possibilities of moral education to him, and takes the element of uncertainty out of that portion of his existence which lies on the other side of the grave. Had it taught you only how to feed and clothe yourselves properly, how to amass wealth, how to multiply the appliances of culture, it would not be the book that it is to you; neither would there be any special moral obligation

resting on you to give it unto others. It is because it has taught you more than this ; because it has revealed God to you, made you aware of your moral condition, introduced you to a Saviour's love, to that order of life which springs therefrom, and to an eternal destiny beyond the tomb,—it is because it has done this for you that you owe to it a measureless debt, and to man a duty whose performance is imperative.

Do not think I trifle with your feelings, much less with the precious name of Jesus, when I inquire at what you value your faith. For what would you part with your hope in Christ? How dear is it to you? “Dearer than life,” you say. “I love my Saviour better than father or mother, better than country, better than kindred. I owe to him a debt greater than I can ever pay. Perish all worldly ambitions, vanish all worldly joys, parted be all earthly ties: leave me only my Saviour. Let but my hand, amid the overflowing of all billows, retain its hold of the cross, and I will rejoice amid my tribulations, and sing psalms in the night of my sorrow.” But is the Saviour more to you than to a man in India? Is redemption any more needed by you? is salvation sweeter? is heaven dearer? Do you stand in any greater need of these things than those who dwell in tents or the islands of the sea? Are not they immortal as well as you? Do they need a Saviour less? Is there not a great brotherhood of birth, of capacity, of destiny, to us all? Are we who sit in this church to-day, enjoying all of these privileges,

blessed with this full, sweet gospel light, — are we not their brethren? Do you think that distance in space, that difference in condition, can loosen a single strand of this fraternal bond with which God has connected us all? Can they annul the obligation which such a divinely-ordained relationship imposes? No, my friends: these things are fixed and absolute; they remain and abide through all time. Do you think that when you have done your duty to your family, to society, to your country, you have done all, discharged your full obligation? Is there not a larger circumference yet lying outside and beyond all these, of which you are the centre? Do you not owe something, does not every man owe something, to the world at large lying in wickedness? Is there not a duty he owes to the race as a race? Can he look at all those millions that live in India, in China, in Arabia, in the islands of the sea, and say, “These are nothing to me. I know that they are ignorant and sinful; I know that they are wretched and brutal: but I am not responsible for their condition”? I say you are responsible. If there is any way by which you can better a single living being, then, from the day when such a possibility was born to you, you are responsible for every undesirable thing in his condition from which you might have relieved him. To that extent you are responsible; and your responsibility was not caused by, neither does it rest on, any election of yours, but upon the great law of co-existence and kinship through nature, and the injunction of Almighty God.

Now, the voice of all these millions is coming to us to-day. A petition signed by an innumerable multitude is now being read before the congress of your consciences. It asks for what? What is the burden of this prayer coming up from this mighty constituency whom we have been elected by God to serve? Listen now while the spirit of universal progress, of universal reconciliation with God, publishes it aloud, and sends it out over your sleeping hearts as a bugle-call is sent forth over a slumbering army, calling it to arms.

They ask for the *Bible*. They say with one voice, with one gesture of entreaty, "Give us the word of God, — that word which is able to make us wise unto salvation. We know that you are wise: remember that we are ignorant. We know that you are happy: remember our misery. We know that you are favored: remember our hard condition. O brothers! give us the knowledge of Christianity." This, I say, is the voice that comes to us; this is the petition submitted to you to-day. What response will you give to the voice? What action will you take on the petition?

You know what the action of this church has always been touching this matter. Never did it deny the universal brotherhood with the race. When the slave needed a champion, it found one here. When the nation's peril was such that it needed the help of the churches, and the sanction of religion upon its course, this pulpit proclaimed fearlessly the great principle of universal brotherhood,

and the duty of patriotism; and whenever any cause dear to man and accepted of God, whether from the north or the south, from the east or the west, has come to this building for help, it has never yet been turned empty away. This is the glory of your record, the eminent characteristic of your history. But one cause, or rather one branch of the great cause, has, from the very commencement of your career, been received with unusual interest, with most touching sympathy. Whoever else might forget the spiritual necessities of foreign lands, this church never forgot them. The generations that have worshipped in this room, that were taught devotion at this altar, and many of them buried from this house, lived and died in the hope that the name of Jesus would at last be known in every land. The ambition of their faith was not local, but cosmopolitan: it embraced the world. Year after year, when the great missionary undertakings were but experiments, when returns were small, and results meagre, they never faltered. Their faith never wavered for an instant. They had no misgivings as to their duty. They kept on giving and praying. Whenever one passed into heaven, another was born into the circle of their service and hope. They cast their bread upon the waters; and God returned to them a hundred-fold. Other churches were formed, flourished, and then fell into pieces; but here we abide unto this day, blessed of God, and filled, I trust, with the Holy Ghost.

What will you say to-day to the faith and hope of your *past*? Will you say it was vain? that it was

foolish? Shall we, or shall we not, add another link this morning to the golden chain that God has thrown around the neck of this church for its honor and ornament?

It is often said that the work of the Board is the work of the churches; but, strictly speaking, it is not the work of the churches, but of the individual donors in the churches. You who give are individually represented by the preachers of the gospel in the heathen world. You send them there; you sustain them there. The good they do can be traced back to your contributions. You who are accustomed to give to this cause have enlightened many a darkened mind, melted many a stubborn heart, broken many a captive's chain. Do not think that your influence for good is confined to America: you must journey far and wide if you would behold where it is working like the leaven in the loaf. In the desert and jungle, in the temple of heathen deities, in those abhorred localities where men eat the flesh of men, so brutalized are they by sin, you are represented, and represented, too, by that gospel which "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." You are here; but your agent is there, doing that ennobling work whereunto you have sent him. Heaven will be full of surprises to many of you; for many whose faces you never saw in the flesh will come and greet you in the spirit-land, and say, "To you I am indebted for the knowledge of the Saviour." I often think that you who are thus givers to Christ will

wonder at nothing — no, not at all the glories of heaven — so much as at the number of stars in the crown of your reward. You had never preached; you did not know that you had been a missionary; you could not recall a single soul you had led to Christ, and yet many are credited to you in the book of God's remembrance. I mention it the more gladly because of the uplifting and ennobling thought with which it is connected. You are here in Boston, engaged in a purely secular life from day to day; but through this society you are associated with the great spiritual movements the world over, and that army of religious teachers which is doing so much to elevate and save mankind. You are connected, I say, with those vast demonstrations of organized Christian effort which are changing for the better the habits and customs and policies of nations and tribes. You are not merely denizens of this city: you are inhabitants of that great outlying realm of spiritual impulse and fervor, — citizens of that commonwealth of saintly men and women who legislate the pure laws of the age on the basis of the gospel, and put in practice the purest code of morals ever published to the race. You are of the number of those who lead "captivity captive," and bring good "gifts unto men."

My friends, the gospel has not been in vain. The earth is not as it was. Men and nations are changed. The old warfares are hushed: their roar and murmur have died away. The triumphs of this age are not those of arms. They are not physical: they are moral. We have at last realized the proverb,

that "he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." The heroism and prowess of men are shown through other media than the knightly lance and brazen shield. Brute force is no longer king. Mind and soul, reason and conscience, have possessed the throne, and rule the world with joint sovereignty. The victories of the age are those of peace and the forces that produce peace. As once it was a disgrace not to be a soldier, and bear arms for the king ; so now it is a loss of credit and honor not to have served in the ranks of those reforms whose object is the amelioration of mankind. Who lives, in any save the narrowest sense of life, to-day, if he is unconnected with those humane and religious movements, which, beyond all else, will make this age memorable in history, — who lives, I say, to-day, if he has not cast himself like a drop in the majestic current of religious effort, willing to be lost if he may only be allowed to mingle with and swell the tide which floats the hopes of men and the revealed glory of heaven to generations yet to be? To breathe is not to live. Breath and physical motion are but the result of that machinery which we have in common with the brutes. To live is to think, to act, to love and feel ; to keep our sympathies in the front rank of human progress ; to discipline our courage by every test of bravery God allows ; to navigate the world of being and of effort, as ships the globe, till we have sailed the full sphere of opportunity, touched at every port, and voyaged on, until at last the soul, like some old argosy freighted with gold and spice and marvel-

lous woods strong with precious odors, comes sailing, laden with the rich experiences of an active life, grandly to its home. This is to live!

For one, I rejoice to-day that I can connect myself, not merely with the agents and methods, but also with the result, of evangelization the world over. Wherever an idol has been burnt; wherever a heathen temple levelled; wherever the bloody Juggernaut stands idle, its heavy wheels unstained with suicidal blood; wherever gross ignorance once was, but is no more; wherever superstition and priestcraft and cruel force have been supplanted by faith and liberty and love,—there I stand, joining in the joy of the delivered, and the greater joy of the deliverers. Arabia is not far distant. Often have I visited it in thought, and knelt in prayer upon its sands, praying for those who make those sands their home. China is not an unknown land, unseen, unloved, by me. I have stood at morn and night amid its swarming millions, amid the results of a civilization old when Christianity was born. I have read out of her books, that were hoary with age centuries before Europe knew how to print a page. And as I have thought of the millions who have lived and died for ages, of those other millions living and dying even yet without the gospel, I have felt like those whom John saw in vision, weary of groaning beneath the throne, and cried, “How long, O Lord! how long?” Well might the poet invoke the elements of air to aid the blessed work of spreading far and near the knowledge of the gospel. Come, ye winds, to whom the Spirit is likened, and ye

waves, that send your undulations round the globe, — come waft and roll the tidings of the cross from pole to pole. Bear the living seed to the desert, that it may bud and “blossom as the rose.” We make the words of Scripture ours, and say, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation !”

The relation which this church has sustained since the Foreign Board was formed, has been, as you all know, peculiarly close and sympathetic. Many of your proudest memories are intertwined with its own as flowers of the same color and fragrance. The first foreign missionary press ever projected originated here, and *one-fourth* of its entire cost was given by this church. That press was like a kernel of seed-corn. It has since multiplied itself a thousand-fold. All over the globe a hundred presses are at work, printing in almost every language and dialect known to man the words that bring “life and immortality to light.” But the roots of this mighty power, — which I can liken unto nothing but the tree of life, whose “leaves are for the healing of the nations,” — are *here*; and when the Scriptures shall have been disseminated everywhere, when a copy of the Bible shall have been put into every hand, and the historian of that day shall search for the parent and birth-place of this mighty movement, he shall find them here. The roots of this tree, I say, can be found only in the soil beneath this pulpit.

How I might multiply historical allusions ! In this church, in the year 1819, on the fifteenth day of October, a little band of seventeen were formed into a church to evangelize the Sandwich Islands. When Mr. Coan last year was telling you from this desk of the thousands and thousands born unto God in those islands, — showing you how a nation had been born, as it were, in a day, — did you recall how that majestic movement, which gave an empire to Christ, was inaugurated in this room ? In this same room, — even here where we worship to-day, — a hundred and eighty missionaries, an audience in themselves, have received their parting instructions and benedictions. From this room they departed to their fields of labor. They journeyed to all parts of the globe. They went forth as ships sail out into fogs. Many never returned : some died under the spear of the savage ; some were beaten down by tropical heats ; some lived the full measure of their years, and their graves are watered unto this day by the tears of those whom they rescued from barbarism and brought back to God. Is it an extravagant form of speech to say that I see these men and women before me to-day ? They stand clothed in white between you and me ! They hold harps in their hands. On each head is a crown. I know not the name of any ; for a new name has been given unto each. It is printed on their foreheads : each letter glows like a ray that comes from the heart of a diamond. Would that they might speak ! Would that they might tell you what they endured, what they accomplished, after they left this room,

until God took them ! Speak to us, ye true heralds of the cross ! Speak to us from the altar of that faith, destined to be universal, on which you laid yourselves as a living sacrifice ! Speak from those far-off graves where the swarth hands of your converts laid you ! Speak from the thrones of your exaltation in heaven ! Speak from the circle of your invisible presence in this familiar room, whose air at this moment you seem to possess ! Speak, and tell us, by the apprehension of your improved intelligence, what is the measure of our duty !

But if all these voices should be hushed ; if this mighty “cloud of witnesses” hovering above us were silent, and no sound should break forth from its vibrant whiteness, —still command and exhortation would not be lacking. A voice whose authority is higher than theirs, whose injunction is more urgent, is now addressing us out of the ineffable glory itself. Rarely does heaven break its august silence ; rarely do its lips condescend to human speech, or deign to take upon themselves the harsh utterances of earth : but now, above the voices of “the spirits of just men made perfect,” above the expressed solicitude of angels, whose joy it is to minister unto the saints, like a great sound which moves along its undulating course through perfect silence, descends upon us the command of God. Shall I interpret the sound to you ? This is the command : hear it as coming to you out of heaven : “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

SABBATH MORNING, JAN. 28, 1872.

SERMON.

TOPIC.—THE ATONEMENT: HOW ENERGIZED, AND HOW RESISTED.

“GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD, WHEREBY YE ARE SEALED UNTO THE DAY OF REDEMPTION.”—Ephes. iv. 30.

THE enmity of the human heart to God, and its manifold depravities, were not removed at the death of Christ, as I have shown in a preceding discourse, but remained in full force after the crucifixion. Pardon was offered, and refused. Man absolutely and obstinately rejected the overtures of Heaven. He would not be benefited by what, at an infinite cost, Heaven had provided for him. Salvation was possible; but none would be saved. Man's sinfulness made him ungrateful, blind to his own interest, and persistent in wickedness; and so it became necessary that a system of enlightenment, of persuasion, of regeneration, should be inaugurated, that the death of Christ, so far as the personal salvation of those for whom he had died was its object, might not be in vain. It was necessary that man's eyes should be opened to perceive his own personal needs, that he might be convicted of sin and danger,

and a desire to be reconciled with God be felt, in order that he might ask of God that help which he could now, with justice to himself, freely grant. Thus it came about, that, at the ascension of Christ, the Holy Spirit became the active representative of the divine endeavor to save men. When Christ departed, the Spirit came; came to take his place; came to push forward to its completion the sublime work which Jesus had carried only up to a certain point. The second and third persons of the Trinity have officially their distinct and respective work: as the Father has his in the plan of atoning for human sin, Christ was to make the atonement, while the Spirit was to incline the hearts of men to accept it. This, in brief, is the work, the mission, of the Spirit. As Christ met with opposition in performing his part of the great work of redemption; as he was derided, resisted, and misunderstood: so now the Holy Spirit in his endeavors is resisted, derided, and misunderstood. My topic then, this morning, is the resistance which men in their wickedness offer to the Holy Spirit in his efforts to save them.

The fundamental principle upon which is based the necessity of the Spirit's assistance, or any assistance beyond that which man can render himself, is this, — that wickedness cannot change itself. A bad inclination never becomes a good inclination by any process of growth or change. It must be eradicated by some extraneous force, if at all. There is no faculty of illumination in darkness: light from abroad must come into it and dispel it, or it will remain darkness

forever. So it is with sinful qualities. Sin has no desire to be aught else than sin: if it had, it would not be sin. Nor has it any power to change itself. There are in it no virtuous forces whatever. It can generate and propagate only after its kind; and against this proposition neither reason nor observation can advance a syllable of objection.

But what is the sequence of this position? In order to grasp it fully, inquire where, and of what character, is sin. You have heard men talk about sin as an impersonal matter, an unincarnated principle or tendency; something horrid, but mysterious; dreadful, but vague; a principle in the moral realm as incomprehensible as an element which ever reveals its existence in terrible hints, but which has defied the skill of the laboratory to analyze and locate. But, friends, no conception can be more erroneous than this. Instead of sin being an impersonal matter, it can exist only in connection with personal beings. There is no sin in hell, save as expressed in devils; there is none on earth, save as felt or manifested in man. Sin is not principle, is not element, is not tendency: it is perverted intelligence; it is force purposely misdirected; it is knowledge and capacity abused. Why, test it by its definitions. Say sin is disobedience: but disobedience implies an agent, and agency implies an act. Say that it is rebellion: but rebellion is the deed of a rebel; and a rebel must be a being, spirit or man. Say it is perversion, "misdirection,"—the mildest word which Theodore Parker, with the vocabularies of

twenty languages to select from, could possibly find : and again I say that there can be no misdirection without an agent to misdirect ; no perversion, unless you have intelligence and capacity to pervert. This you all see ; to this you assent. What, then, is it in which we are all agreed ? In this, I respond ; viz., that sin is unavoidably connected with persons. There is no evil on the earth that is not incarnated. Christ did not die to deliver us from an atmospheric element. The Spirit does not war against impersonal qualities. God does not threaten a drift or tendency in the moral realm when he pronounces his curse upon sin. As sound must have a medium through which to travel, or it is not sound ; so sin must have a medium of expression, or it is not sin. Sin, if it exists at all, exists as individualized in man or spirit. An agent is the antecedent of all transgression. There is no wickedness independent of wicked thought, purpose, and act.

When, therefore, it was said — to which you assented — that sin could not change itself, it was equivalent to saying and assenting to this proposition, — that the sinner could not change himself. It is only different forms in which to state the same identical truth. Wickedness cannot become goodness of its own power : therefore, as all wickedness exists only in connection with persons, no wicked person can become a good person unassisted by outside help. And this is precisely the position that the Scripture takes, as in Rom. viii. 7 : “ The carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God,

neither indeed can be." At this point you see wherein, and how much, every one of us is dependent on the Spirit. We are dependent to the fullest measure, to the extreme extent, of *incapacity*. Wicked by nature, we are unable of ourselves to grow into any thing better. What the fields owe to the solar light and warmth we all owe to the Spirit. But for it, the very germs of holiness would have rotted in us, and our souls lain forever barren and unfruitful. There is not a star in all the firmament that owes so much to the sun which shines upon it, and by whose reflected light it glows, as we owe to the Spirit. There is not a bird that flies more dependent on the air it breathes, and beats with rapid wing, than we are upon the Spirit of God for every breath and movement we have had in virtue. To sum it all up in the most absolute of all forms of statement, we owe no more to Christ for making the atonement for us than we do to the Holy Spirit for inclining us to accept, and rendering us able to appreciate it. In either case, the necessity was absolute, and the favor infinite.

One caution at this point. There is a loose way of talking, which, I fear, is spreading the idea that none but professed Christians experience the work of the Spirit. As well might it be said that conservatories and flower-gardens and well-tended fields are the only places on the face of the globe that feel the rays of the sun; whereas the sun shines on all with impartial ray. The Spirit, like Christ, does not labor for the disciples alone. It is not alone to bring

forward these in holiness that he strives ; but the publicans and sinners, and those outside of the favored circle, are recipients of his love and effort. The Spirit, it is true, is only *in* the regenerated heart ; but, nevertheless, he stands *at the door* of every heart beating among men. As the sun is on the ice, so is the Spirit on the impenitent heart, melting it. As the rain falls on the flower and bramble alike, so the gift of the Spirit is given to all ; this being the difference, — that, while the flower converts the visitation into sweetness, the brier perverts it to the edging of all its many thorns. But as with Christ, so with the Spirit, the guilt of rejection implies an antecedent offer. Solicitation precedes refusal. None “grieve the Spirit” who have not felt the Spirit’s approach. At the door of every conscience, whether of penitent or impenitent, the Spirit stands to-day, offering its aid, quickening, praying, commanding. If any of you hear a voice saying to you to-day, “Repent,” “Believe ;” if any of you shall have longings for a nobler life rise up within you ; if any feel the upbraidings of a guilty conscience ; if any shall hear the words shaping themselves for your ear, “*Now* is the accepted time,” — know this, that the Spirit is fulfilling his work upon your soul ; and act as one who stands at a most solemn moment in his earthly existence.

Is there not something inexpressibly beautiful in the thought, that God’s Spirit is imparted unto all ? The rock is hard ; but its hardness cannot prevent the warm beam from falling upon it. The heart may

be hard ; but the Spirit's influence, shot like a ray from the orb of God's mercy, falls lovingly upon it, and no hardness can turn it back. There is something large and lavish in all divine operations. God is full and rich, and is not compelled to practise a cautious economy in the outgoing of his beneficence. He pours his largess down upon us as the spring rains are poured upon the earth, — upon rock and barren spot as truly as upon the fruitful soil. And in nothing is this peculiarity more beautifully illustrated than in the dealings of the Holy Spirit with us. Why should the Spirit be given at all? Was not Christ enough? Was not Calvary a sufficient demonstration of Heaven's love for man? Does it not suffice when a man lies down and dies for his friend? What love is this which supplements Calvary with the Spirit, and to the gift of a Saviour adds the gift of the Sanctifier? What charity is like the charity of the skies? what benevolence like that which opens the gates of mercy to the rebellious, and still prolongs its stay to guide them thither?

The mission of the Spirit, then, is to incline the soul to accept the atonement as wrought out by Christ; and, after it has accomplished this, to develop the justified soul in Christian graces. To this end it uses many agents and agencies. By truth it enlightens the mind, and convicts the conscience; through providence it provides the occasions and provocations of thought: it shocks the paralyzed conscience into life, stimulates the reason, and puts a premium on the exercise of every noble faculty.

Allow me to allude more fully to the use the Spirit makes of *truth*

This is what Satan hates ; for it is his direct opposite. God is truth. Satan is a lie : in him lurk all the springs and sources of deceit. Falsehood is his child, and darkness his servant. His great object is to deceive men, — to make what is not appear as though it were, and what is as though it were not. The sinner is a deceived, a blinded man. A wicked man, in old Saxon, meant a bewitched man, a person under the potent charm of an evil influence or spirit. Let us revive the old significance ; for in the epithet is a precise description. In sin, viewed from the level of corrected judgment, is no sense, no reasonableness. In this condition the Spirit finds man. He takes truth, and with it lights up the man's darkness. With truth he tears away the bandage of error from before the eyes. With truth he starts the conscience, which, like a long-checked pendulum, has hung in motionless poise ; and all the moral sensibilities, like exquisitely-wrought machinery, are set in motion, each faculty performing its office. With truth he frames the unanswerable argument which demonstrates that obedience to God is our just and reasonable service, and urges home upon our conscience the duty of repentance. With truth he kindles remorse, which often, like a fire lighted amid corruption, burns to the purification of the soul. With truth the Spirit unveils the face of God, and shows us the features of Divinity, — that face in which all nobleness abides ; but chiefest over all, giving fashion to the countenance, is love

for man. This is the Spirit's work, and the use he makes of truth.

My friends, I know not a greater crime than to resist the truth. He who crushes out a longing after goodness, he who fights down a conviction of duty, he who resists the voice of conscience, he who persists in wickedness when virtue is made known to him, he who hesitates in doing what he knows he ought to do, acts not only against the universal sentiment of honesty and justice, but against the Spirit of the living God. I am not talking of truth in the abstract, of the truth of mathematics, or the truth of the sciences, but of that truth in thought, conscience, and feeling, which tells you what to do, and how to live; to what to cleave, what avoid. Talk not of graves where sleep the dust of the departed; tell me not of tears shed at the base of marble and granite shaft, nor speak of hours passed in mournful musing beneath the willow's shade. The graves where angels weep are in the hearts of men; and darker than the shade of cypress are the shadows which rest above the spot where longings for a better life, and resolutions of duty, lie buried.

If any of you have convictions, which, up to this time left unattended to, ought now to be obeyed, obey them; if any longings hitherto repressed, cage them no more, but, like birds too long detained from sun and native skies, let them have liberty. Say, "Fly, thought and hope, imagination, and all the winged faculties of my soul,—fly toward heaven, and bear me on your wings!" If any have felt the drawings

of the Spirit, but have resisted ; if any, being rebuked, have hardened their hearts against the Spirit's voice ; if any, convinced, convicted, have halted between two opinions, — resist, delay, no longer ; yield. Even as a rebellious child, smitten by the grieved look of the mother's face, repents, and, weeping, flings its arms around her neck, saying, “ Mother, forgive ! forgive me, my dear, patient mother ! ” — so cry, and cast your arms around the neck of God to-day, and you shall be forgiven.

The Spirit may therefore be regarded as representing all those tendencies and influences which incline your soul to repentance toward sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ did no more surely die to purchase your pardon than the Spirit lives to persuade you to accept it. The love of the one for you is no more intense than the love of the other. The dignity and excellence of each are the same. In vain might the Spirit have existed if Christ had not died ; in vain Christ have died if the Spirit had not come to apply that death to man's redemption. If there is to us any spiritual understanding, Christians, any discernment and apprehension of the truth, any correct knowledge of our own condition, it is entirely due to the operation of the Spirit in our souls. If in weakness and poverty any of you have ever been sustained, if in perils delivered, if when stricken with grief you have been comforted, it is due to the indwelling of the Spirit. If the future impends like a star-lit sky above you ; if life seems full of noble uses, and dying like the taking-on of a larger life, —

then it is because the Spirit has taken of the things of God, and revealed them unto you. To me there is nothing in the whole range of pious reflection so lovely as the thought, that the power of God is in the hearts of all true believers, working out therein the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Passions are being subdued, habits corrected, the wicked vagaries of the mind checked, the imagination purified, and every faculty restored to its original state and use. All this under the direction of the Spirit. There is not a virtue not born of the Spirit; not a noble impulse, nor a holy longing, of which the Spirit of God is not the direct parent. What a spectacle it will be when the graces of all the sanctified, the ripened fruits of the Spirit, shall be grouped around their great Author in heaven!

Observe what liberties, what precious freedom, come with the Spirit. I have heard men talk as if, when man yielded himself to the control of the Spirit, he subjected himself to a form of bondage; and even Christians, I fear, are slow to learn what is the liberty of the children of God. If it is bondage when eyes that have not seen are endowed with vision; if it is slavery when the fetters of evil habits are stricken from the soul, and it is enabled to elect a nobler mode of action; if it degrades the mind to have its ignorance dispelled, its darkness illuminated, its grossness refined, — then does the coming of the Spirit bring bondage, and not otherwise. The Spirit never employs force. He knocks before he enters any heart. He respects man's independence. He modifies con-

duct through the inclinations. He can be resisted ; he can be grieved ; he can be driven away. When the soul accepts his guidance, it is by a free, an un-compelled act of self-surrender.

Let us observe well to-day this fact, — a fact which must be accepted in its full force if one is to understand the nature of the Spirit, or realize the guilt of rejection. The Spirit will never attempt the exertion of his omnipotent power. Against the citadel of your opposition he employs no weapons but those of love. He prevails, if at all, as a mother prevails, — by the strength of her affection. Solicitation and entreaty, counsel and reproof, warning and appeal, — these he will use, these he is now using, to bring you to accept the pardon of sin, and reconciliation with God through the Lord Jesus Christ ; but beyond this, my friend, neither now, nor at any future time, will the Spirit of God proceed. With you rests the decision. In your own mind are the forces that are to settle the question, and by your own free choice is the destiny of your eternal condition to be fixed.

Here, then, as jury on your own condition, you sit to-day ; and this is the question to decide : “ Shall I become a Christian, or not ? ” Put the proposition clearly and plainly before your mind. Let the query come squarely up before the bar of your conscience. Settle, at least, one thing in the realm of morals to-day. The voice of the Spirit is calling to some of you. If the sound should come from heaven itself ; if the Holy Ghost should take shape of flesh and

blood, and, standing revealed, should say, "Man of sins and infirmities, repent of your sins, and be braced with power," — the call would be no more direct, personal, and emphatic than it is to your soul in its secret musings and debates at this time.

The Spirit uses many agencies, and operates along many lines of influence. Now reason, now memory, now affection, is used; but more often yet, when the subject is intelligent, does he put the pressure of some strong conviction upon the soul. If any of you have, therefore, a conviction that you ought to become Christians, you can safely regard that as the particular form in which the Spirit is now addressing you. If your mind feels the pressure of this obligation; if it is enlightened to such an extent as to apprehend duty; above all, if you have found it hard to escape the feeling that now is the time for you to act, to decide this long-delayed matter, — I charge you to-day, that a grave and solemn period of your life has been reached. Such a conviction as this cannot safely be trifled with. You are in the most favorable position that an honest and sincere man can possibly be in. From where you stand to-day, the path of duty stretches broad and straight before you. You cannot mistake your position or your duty. The avenue that commences at the very point at which your feet now stand leads on and up until it terminates at the great white throne. A movement of your mind, the passing of a thought, a resolution, and you are a Christian, moving on in company with those who know no savior but their Lord, no master but their

God. Advance, O men and women ! Fling doubt aside. Away with hesitation : to hesitate is sin. Advance, I say, whither the Spirit, through your conscience, is inclining you.

There is no graver sin in the world than to act against one's convictions. He who to-day shuts his eyes to the light deserves darkness to-morrow. There is but one star by which a person 'can safely steer: it is duty. Fade all other lights, sink all other orbs, extinguished be all other beams : let only this point of fixed fire remain, and it shall be as safe to sail in life's darkest midnight as if we moved amid the radiance of a thousand suns. But alas for the soul, that, seeing it, steers not invariably by it ! The waters that engulf men are wide, cold, and deep : death looks up from their leaden depths in all its ghastly whiteness. Dense and impenetrable is the darkness around those who shut their eyes to the light ; wild and fierce are the currents against which men contend who neglect to do what their conscience tells them is right. I submit if this is not true even in the minor matters of purpose and life, — even in our treatment of men. Who, then, is able to give full expression to its truth when applied to the question of eternity and our treatment of the Holy Ghost ? To stand in the presence of such considerations is enough to shock apathy itself into anxious thought, and cause even an idiot to look grave. For a soul to stand braced in stubborn indifference, when all the forces of love, mercy, and honor, urge it on ; for a man to hug the earth, when all the attraction of the skies is

centred on him ; when heaven, like a great moral magnet, is drawing him upward toward itself, — is a deed no one can do, unless he has been visited by and has resisted the Holy Ghost. This is the deed which no one can commit, save at long intervals ; which no one could commit often, and live ; and which committed once too many times, there remains for it, through all the kingdom of God, no more forgiveness. It is that great, dark, unpardonable sin, that awful, defiant act of the soul, which digs a chasm betwixt it and reconciliation with God, which even the cross of a dying Saviour cannot bridge. But, brethren, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. You will not throw away the chance of a lifetime. You will not, in God's own house, reject the overtures of his love. You will not harden your hearts to-day, and be of the number of those, who, having ears hear not, and having eyes see not, the things that concern their salvation. Once more have you been granted an audience at the mercy-seat ; once more are the sandals and the robe and the ring brought forth for you. Will you wear them ? The Spirit stands waiting for your answer. Is he to be grieved again ?

It may be that some of you hesitate because of the very greatness of your sins. If so, you err. I have striven in all my preaching here to give you true views of God ; to make you understand that his love is infinite, and that to forgive is his delight. May the Lord keep you from an unbelief begotten of a

groundless despair ! Such despondency is unreasonable. Your Father in heaven is not one who is naturally averse to you, and must be won over by many arguments. He is not one who yields only to the force of entreaty. He loves you not as the result of your repentance. This is not God. For, all these years, God has been wishing to forgive you : he has searched for a reason to pardon you ; he has longed for an opportunity to exhibit mercy. From the time when you began to sin, he has been studying to reclaim you. Through all the centuries of human history he has been seeking and saving the lost ; gathering all the poor, weak, and wretched to his arms. And his arms are not full yet : there is room for more ; there is room for you, friend ; there is room for us all.

You must never try, my people, to put a human estimate upon God's nature, or upon that mercy to man which is the proper expression of it. His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are his ways our ways. Neither men nor angels can gauge him. He is a marvel even to the heavens, — a marvel of love and condescension. The blessed spirits around him, who see him constantly, cannot understand him. They look at him, and wonder ; they gaze and adore. Even we who have been saved by his love, we who are daily and hourly sustained by it, cannot understand it. We taste it ; we feed on it ; we are grown by it. But what do we know of the Almighty Being from whom it comes ? No more than the happy, sleepy-eyed babe on the mother's breast knows of the working of the mother's heart toward it, or the far-reaching thoughts of the

mother's mind. The little thing can take of the mother's life ; but what does it know of the mother's life ? Compare the body, the mind, the soul, of the mother, with the body, mind, and soul of the child, and tell me how the child can understand the mother, the babe comprehend the woman. And so, as I picture it, is this divine love that holds us and bends over us. The whole race is only a babe in its arms. It feeds us ; it clothes us ; its breath and touch are on us ; when we are gathered to its heart, we are made warm and happy. But who in all the race can understand it ? Not one. It is the mystery of God and of life, the wonder of the earth, and the marvel of eternity.

And now, friends, listen to me. Before I close, I have a great truth to tell you, — a truth, I trust, you will never forget. This great, divine love is the love which is seeking and claiming you to-day for its own. Picture it to your minds : see it standing before you, its face aglow, its arms outstretched, its lips parting for speech. "My child," it says, "I have waited long for you. I thought you would relent. I knew you would repent at last. My patience has its reward. Come, my child, come. At last I have you in my arms." Is it true, friend ? Have you, at last, put yourself into the arms of God ?

SABBATH MORNING, FEB. 4, 1872.

SERMON.

TOPIC.—SAVING THE LOST.

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP.— Luke xv. 3-7.

THE audience to which Christ delivered the parable that I have read you, and the two with which it stands in close conjunction, was a remarkable one. It is described in the following words of Luke: "Then drew near to him *all* the publicans and sinners for to hear him." "This," says Trench, "does not imply that at any particular moment, in a certain neighborhood, this class drew near to hear him; but the evangelist is rather giving the prevailing feature of the whole of Christ's ministry, or at least of one epoch of it; that it was such a ministry as to draw all the outcasts of the nation, the rejected of the scribes and Pharisees, around him; that there was a secret attraction in his person and his word which drew all of them habitually to him for to hear him." He did not repel them, as many of his professed followers have and do the like classes of our day and generation. He did not fear pollution from their touch. He did not so mistrust his own goodness. He

did not feel so anxious as to what the purists of his time would say about it, that he dare not be seen talking with those whom he wished to better. He was, rather, so intrenched in his goodness, so pervaded with the one desire to benefit them, that it never occurred to him that they would or could hurt him. He had come "to seek and to save the lost;" and here they were. It was to reach and benefit just such people that he left heaven. He greeted them graciously, therefore, instructed them, won upon their regard, and lived as a benefactor should on familiar terms with those whom the Pharisees called wretches. It was "wretches" that Christ came to save; and he found them on every hand, no more and no less than any of you who profess his name can find in Boston to-day, if you will only go from house to house, and street to street, preaching in such a wise, winning way as Christ employed. What wonderful illustrations he used! — how homely! how apt! how suggestive! If they had gone to the synagogues, they could not have understood the scribes and the doctors of the law, mumbling over the traditions and the creeds of the Jewish fathers; and as for the Pharisees, they knew that they were hypocrites, and enjoyed nothing better, doubtless, than to hear Christ stand up and tell them plainly to their faces what they were. But here was a young man that did not despise them and call them hard names, but gave them credit for all the good that was in them, and treated them like human beings, — almost as if they were his brethren; who told them beau-

tiful stories that always had a point to them, and set them thinking, and sometimes drew tears from their eyes: and he always closed with an entreaty for them to be good, or an expression of hope and encouragement; or else would tell them to ask of God any favor, and he would give it them. My friends, are you quite sure but that we must have done with all our relying on law to better men, and with bluster and denunciation, and copy more from the sweet gentleness of Christ, before the publicans and sinners of our age will gather to hear us gladly?

The sinner is set forth in the parable as a *silly*, wandering sheep. And it suggests what is true,—that sin is not always a matter of premeditation. Sin is oftentimes an ignorance, a misunderstanding, a darkness of mind. There is such a thing as being ambushed morally; of being unexpectedly set upon and captured before you have time to rally your powers of resistance. Men do not sit down and deliberately plan out evil, and pledge themselves to it. A young man does not at eighteen say, “Now I will waste my time and squander my money, ruin my health, and hurt as many by my influence as I can.” That is not the way the thing is done. It would not be true to so represent it, any more than it would have been true for Christ to have represented the sheep as getting together in one corner of the fold, and saying, “Now let us get out and run off into the woods, and get bitten by wolves, and be killed.” Neither sheep nor men act in that way. Men *wander* off; they get led astray; they get farther away from virtue than

they ever expected to be ; they are lost before they know it. Looking at him from one point of view, the sinner is to be condemned ; looking at him from another, he is to be pitied. In this latter light it is that the parable presents him to us. It is in this light that Jesus was continually looking at men. "I came not," he said, "to condemn the world, — that is not the object of my mission, — but that the world through me might be *saved*."

My friends, let us catch the spirit of the Saviour as we go in and out among men. Let us settle upon some plan of conduct, some style of treatment. As a preacher, I have had to decide which is the most efficient, the most Christ-like way to approach men in presenting the gospel. Some think I have made a mistake ; that I do not threaten enough ; do not attempt to terrify enough ; do not preach the law and judgment as I ought. But, friends, I do not think that these critics are right. I cannot find any such roughness in Christ. He instructed men ; he enlightened them. He touched their hearts by his all-including sympathy. He won their affection, and made his life a sacrifice for them. But he did not thunder and blaze away at them. He did not scold and threaten, and try to frighten them with horrible pictures of what would happen to them if they did not love him, and do as he told them to do. But he told them of God, and made them love him by showing how deeply and warmly he loved them. He educated the moral sense in their hearts, which is the sole parent of obligation. He made the best feel they were not good enough, and the worst

feel that they might be, and ought to be, better. And, to my mind, much of the preaching that has been since, and much which has been printed and read by the churches, is simply shocking. It is no more like the Sermon on the Mount than a thunder-cloud is like sunshine, or a December tempest like a June day. The one is bitter and biting; it smites and tears all the foliage away: but the other makes all the repressed juices to start, and the leaves to unfold themselves, and all the buds to flush in pink and red. The one strips: the other clothes the landscape in life and beauty. I think the man who preaches nearest to the sentiment of these parables I have read you, preaches nearest as Christ preached, and as he to-day wishes his servants to preach; and all I ask or desire, as a preacher, is, that the spirit which pervades these words, and fills all this chapter as a spray of heliotrope fills a room with fragrance, may more and more fill my heart, and be yielded forth in all my words, when I talk to you of your sins, and your salvation therefrom through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. The lesson I wish you who are sabbath-school teachers and mission-school teachers, and you who are officers in this church, and all you who are in any sense co-laborers with me, to learn to-day, at this point, is, to copy more after Christ when you talk to men about moral duty and their souls' salvation. Men are like ice. You can melt them sooner by being warm toward them, by centring the rays of a great, earnest, glowing love upon them, than by going at them with hammers of threat

and warning, and trying to beat them down and pulverize them. Sandstone kind of men can be treated in that way; but, when you hit a man in that style made of granite, the hammer recoils to the injury of the palm that held it. June is better than December to quicken life and growth in the natural world; and, if you want people to blossom and get fruitful spiritually, pour around them the warm, genial atmosphere of God's penetrative and stimulative love.

The contrast, as you observe, in the parable, is not entirely perfect; the antithesis is not exact. A sheep that wanders from the flock is not necessarily lost; he is not irrecoverably gone. He may tire of his wanderings, and yearn for the companionship of the flock. This desire may prompt him to retrace his steps. His remembrance of the direction he took when he went astray may be sufficient to direct his return; or by a happy fortune, mere luck, he may unexpectedly stumble upon the flock, and be guided safely again by the good shepherd's voice. And thus, as you see, a sheep that has wandered may of himself return to the flock, or by good fortune be delivered from danger, and restored to safety.

But, friends, this is not true of God's sheep. It is not true of men and women who wander from virtue. There is in sin a centrifugal tendency. The soul that starts from the centre of virtue is flung farther and farther away from it. Sin has no virtuous inclinations: it is wicked in inception, and wicked in continuance. A current can as well of its own power roll back upon itself as that sinfulness of its own

volition can turn heavenward. The soul that is led astray by it is led farther and farther astray: it plunges deeper and deeper into the wilderness. The wolves that pursue are re-enforced at every gorge. Every chasm adds a fiercer mouth and a deadlier hate to the blood-thirsty pack. Hell, once on track of a man, gives him no time to think, no chance to turn. Its aim is capture; and the end of its chase is death. If the lost soul is found, it must be because the shepherd goes out to find it; if the wandering spirit is reclaimed to virtue, it must be because the searching love of God has gone out after it, and found it, and brought it back.

My friend, I trust that you will not underrate the significance of these divine influences, and those divinely-appointed agents which are sent out in warning and argument and entreaty to prevent you from farther wandering. Recognize reverently and gladly to-day their source and value. They are God's messengers to bring you safely back to that innocence, to that rectitude, from which you may have wandered. My voice, this holy day, the sanctuary, this worship-hour, — all represent the wish and will of Heaven for your conversion. They come to you as the voice of a father to his lost child in the night, who is running wildly about he knows not whither, saying, "This way, my son, this way: father is here!" God is so calling to many of his sons in this house to-day. If there is an impenitent, a careless soul present, I would say to him, Every moment that you remain as you are, you are getting farther and farther from

God and heaven and hope. You may not intend to be carried away ; you may think that you are not being ; but you are. The law that works in you, that moulds your life, and directs it, is the law of evil influence, and accumulates itself momentarily. You are like a bird caught in the path of a gathering tornado. You are powerless to breast its increasing current of fierce violence. You are but a bunch of streaming feathers and quivering flesh, pitted against a power which uproots the oaks, and starts the very turf on the sides of the mountains. There are but two possible decisions for you to reach, — either yield to the wind, and be borne to death ; or mount with one bold push of purpose and nerve above the pitiless sweep of the tempest into the tranquil and unvexed spaces overhead. No man, no woman, can remain in the current of sin, and live. There is not a person of all you who are present, there is not a person in this city, or in the world, that can put himself into the current of his sinfulness, in the whirling and writhing and onrushing violence of it, and not be hurled and beaten down upon the adamant of God's justice, and killed. Do not believe those who tell you that sin can redeem itself : it never did it, and it never will do it. The wandering soul never wanders into heaven, never regains the fold it has wickedly left, by luck. No delay, no length of time, will bring you to it. You must yield yourself to the arms of the Shepherd, and let him carry you back, if you are ever to get back. Why not yield to-day ? Why not say, “ Good Shepherd, take me in your

arms, and carry me back whence I have strayed to-day. I am lost; I am bewildered; I have no confidence in myself. Do thy will with me. Only let me feel, before the sun sets to-night and I have time to wander farther, that the gates of thy love unfold me, and the angels of thy care fence me from danger while I sleep"? This is penitence; this is conversion; this is the very embodiment of salvation.

My people, refresh your memories to-day with the real object of Christ's incarnation. He did not come to publish certain sublime truths. He did not come to found a church, to build up a religious hierarchy, to introduce habits of prayer, and peculiar views of God and duty. He came absorbed, rather, with one thought,—devoted to one sublime, unselfish mission. *It was to go after his lost sheep.* This yearning, this irrepressible desire, it was which burned and glowed in his whole life, as the pure fire glows in the diamond. This it was which gave fervor and intense beauty to his life. He never took a step, he never made a motion, in the flesh, that was not in the direction and for the recovery of some *lost* one. He was continually turning his ear to catch some cry; continually straining his eye to find some flying, pursued form to succor and defend. As he declared with his own mouth, the very object of his coming was to seek and save that which was *lost*. Before Christ came, who cared for the *lost*? Who cares for the bleaching bone in the wilderness?—it may be the bone of an ox, or a dog, or a man: who cares which? It is a dry and life-

less bone, and nothing more. It has no connection with our beating flesh, no relation with our living thought. Who cares for the shell on the shore? The waves have heaved it up from the caverns of the deep, and ground it into the sand: there let it lie. What hunter cares for the scattered feathers which some fierce hawk has torn from the back and breast of its prey? Why mourn over a bunch of soiled plumage? Had the hunter seen the hawk pounce on it, he might, perchance, have shot the hawk, and spared the bird; but the bird is *lost*. Why look? why mourn? why care? So little man cared for man before Christ came. The life of Christ was wonderful, because it was full of deeds nobody else had ever done. His words were marvellous, because they were such as no one else had ever spoken. His very sympathies were a revelation. No other bosom had ever felt them. He took the world by surprise. He was original, unique; a puzzle and a problem to the best men of his day. Hypocrites deemed him a hypocrite like themselves, only acting with greater cunning. He was too good for the wicked to believe; he was too good for the best to appreciate. His very disciples grew to understand him slowly and by degrees. They never did fully understand him until he was taken from them. They needed to be enlightened by the Spirit before they could apprehend whom and what they had had with them. It was only after the Spirit descended, quickening them, that they understood his mission, and began to be kindled and to burn with his own enthusiasm for souls. Then, and only

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then, it was that they started out, inspired with the spirit of their Master.

My people, let us remember this. Let us file through the hard shell of creed and formula, until we come to the real kernel of our Christian life. Let us resist the wrapping and covering up in form and ceremony, in definition and pious habit, this primal, generic idea of our faith. It is easy to multiply dogma, easy to magnify the value of precise theological statement (and I do not say that such do not have their uses); but to my mind they are merely husks in which growth has incased the kernels, — merely moss which the ages have accumulated on the front of that chiselled rock on which our hopes are built. Strip away the husks, and fling them to the winds; but the corn, rich, nourishing, and golden, will appear. Scatter the moss, and there before your eye, without vestment or covering, bare, unscreened, as hewn from all eternity, stands the rock, Christ Jesus, embodying this grand conception, and saying to all human-kind, “Come, ye shattered men; come, ye women riven in your hopes of a purer womanhood; build on me, who am the only sure foundation, and you shall stand in the day when the mountains themselves shall fall.”

Let us all learn afresh to-day the lesson of Christ's life. Let us penetrate, I say, in thought, through the opposition of theological and formularistic strata, until we lay bare the primeval granite which underlies the entire gospel structure. Let us so carve this thought on the tablet of our memories, that the friction of time

shall never erase it, — some of us as a matter of hope, some as a matter of guidance in our labors, — that Christ came “to seek and save the *lost*.” This was the object of his incarnation; this the sublime motive which prompted him to take flesh. Ask him as he stands on the portico of the temple, beset with temptation, why he came; and the voice which quivers downward through the air is, “To save the *lost*.” Ask him as he rises from his agonizing prayer in the garden, when a thicker darkness than subsequently draped the earth lies on his soul; and he says again, “I came to save the *lost*.” Ask him as he sinks fainting beneath the cross; and amid his panting are shaped the selfsame words, — “To save the *lost*.” Ask him as he hangs on the cross itself, about to yield up the ghost; and his quivering lips reply, “I came to save the *lost*; and here my task is finished.” And if you should ask once again, — even as he was ascending, — down from the deepening glory, as he rises and as he disappears, descend the words, “I came to seek and save the *lost*.” Not only to save, but to *seek*. Who here can measure this seeking love of God? How many of us present can rejoice in it? We were sought after; we were discovered; we were found. Many of us were far from Christ when he came out after us. We owe it to his *seeking* that we sit here in hope to-day. While we praise his saving, let us not forget his *seeking* love.

Are there not some here who feel that Christ is seeking after them to-day? Are there any who are foolishly and wickedly hiding themselves from his

seeking? Is it credible that any here desire to be lost? any here, who, found of Christ, resist, and refuse to be lifted in his divine arms, and carried back to the fold? I refuse to believe it. Such conduct is not merely foolish, nor suicidal, nor base: it is all of these combined. I have no word for it.

My friends, I have shown you Christ, and made you to see the object of his mission. You all see what it was; and the object of Christ shows us what should be the object of the Christian. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord." What Christ lived for, we, who profess to have Christ in us, the hope of glory, must live for. The object, then, of the Christian's life, your object and mine, my brother and sister, is to save the lost. This object should be to all other objects of our lives what the firmament is to the stars: it includes them all. Is there a man sinking?—become to him what Christ was to Peter,—a savior. Is that man by your side blind?—touch with the fingers of a Christ-like influence his sightless orbs, that he may see. Are these thousands around you hungry and faint?—cause them to sit, then, while you break and distribute the bread of your bounty among them. Are there publicans and sinners in Boston, men and women despised, dangerous, mean, and wicked?—then go and speak some parable like this of the lost sheep unto them. Is there some sinful woman, whom a public opinion, seeking only to stone her, drags into your presence for judgment?—then (I speak not as a man: I speak with Christ standing back of me, and

telling me to say it), — *then do as Christ did*. Say to her, “Go and sin no more.” Do you think that one silly or wicked lamb has wandered from the fold, and is to-day in the wilderness of human life, lost? — go out, then, inspired with the seeking love of God; search far and near — street, ally, and brothel — until you find that soul, and bring it back. Give to Christ a second incarnation in your own person; and let the same sublime purpose, born of no parent less noble than the mercy of God, which breathed in all the words and acts of Christ, animate you.

The passage says that he sought his own until he *found* it.

My friends, have you never marvelled at the perseverance of God? Do you not know of souls, perhaps your own among the number, for whom Christ sought years before he found? Messenger after messenger was sent out; but you evaded them. You loved to wander and roam; you delighted in sinful independence; you hid yourself away from him. The starving child fled from the loaf; the pilgrim, dying of thirst, avoided the spring. But divine love persevered. Mercy had been sent out to seek; and seek it did. It followed you in all your devious windings; through the thickets and into the chasms of your experience it pursued; and at last, when hope itself had given up in despair, it found you, — found, and brought you *home*. We are like vases of rare tint and exquisite workmanship, which, shattered by some violent stroke, have been regathered in all their fragments, and so carefully re-joined, and glued with

transparent cement, that no eye can detect where were the lines of rupture. The seeking love of God found us in fragments, and made us over into a perfect whole. If any of you have children or friends or relatives far away from God, widely wandering from the truth of statement and life, I trust you will not be discouraged. Hope and pray always. Die as you have lived, hoping and praying. Build your hope on the *seeking* love of Christ. Remember that his whole heart, all his energies, are expended in *seeking* and saving the lost. Ally your life with his in this work; help reform society; help reform the Church, so that people shall not stare and look astonished when a really bad man or wicked woman is saved; when a soul that has in very fact been *lost*, and which was found in its sins as a lamb found in some dark, stony gorge, nearly dead from exposure and wounds, is brought to the fold. Help reform the pulpit, until the under-shepherds of Christ, when proclaiming the gospel, shall go forth on their beneficent errands, provided only with peaceful crook and tuneful pipe, and not armed with clubs of theological controversy with which to surround a crowd of wanderers, and drive them by main force into the fold. It is the seeking, and not the driving love of God, that you are to imitate. You are not to treat publicans and sinners as Christ did the Pharisees, and say, "Woe unto you!" If you come across a Pharisee, a real long-faced hypocrite, a man who believes in perfection, and acts as if possessed with the Devil, say "Woe" to him, or any thing else you please, and feel that you have the gospel sanction on the utter-

ance: but to the Thomases weak of faith, to the hot-headed Peters, to the man who casts out devils without nominally confessing Christ, to the publicans and sinners, to the ignorant and erring of this generation, say not "Woe!" for you have no sanction of Christ to do it. Go where these classes are; get them around you, and make a parable to them rather, as this about the lost sheep, or that of the lost piece of money, or that of the prodigal son; and let the spirit of your words be, not that of denunciation, but of hope, instruction, and encouragement. Say unto them, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened."

At this point, and in close connection with what I am saying, is another suggestion, derived from the story of the parable. After the shepherd had found the lost sheep, he is represented as "laying it on his shoulders." How tenderly the good shepherd is represented as acting toward the sheep that had caused him such anxiety, and cost him so much toil and trouble! He does not chastise it; he does not chide and threaten; he does not even drive it with reproaches back to the fold. He does not say to a servant, "Here, take it up, and carry the silly thing back." No: he stoops his own shoulder to it, and with his own strength carries it to the fold. Here, my people, you see the sustaining love of Christ. His seeking love is not more wonderful in its efforts to find us than is his supporting love to uphold us after we are found. The highest form of perseverance is love. It is stronger than hate; for the grave

ends that : but love lives, and weeps above the grave, powerful, intense, as ever. And if there is a single soul in divine presence at this moment whom the Saviour has found by his long-searching mercy ; a man or woman who lies in moral weakness and prostration ; one who longs to be in the fold of God, but is unable to arise and go of himself, — believe me, friend, Christ, the great Shepherd, himself stoops to take you up. Yield yourself to his arms ; say, “ Here I am, lost, sin-bitten, helpless. I know not where the fold is, or how to get there. O Saviour ! *carry* me ; take me just as I am : do not leave me another night ; carry me to thy fold ! ” Say this ; say it in your heart ; say it now, just as you are ; and He who bore all our sins will bear you, and you shall find the fold even as you yield yourself to his arms ; for the arms of Christ are the fold of God.

My people, I choose my themes, when I am to teach you from this place, deliberately. I am as one driven for time ; who cannot tell his story in full, and so selects what seems the most essential for the understanding of the message intrusted to him. The time will come when I shall not teach you. What thoughts I have of God will stay at home, and go not out into the great thoroughfare along which the forceful energies of the human mind march in stately columns, seen and felt of all. What views may come to me of the divine nature, what impulses may be imparted, will matter little then to you. But now you hear me, and my thoughts are your thoughts ; for I

give them freely, and hold nothing back. You know my faith; for I have often told you of it. I hold that all things in this world work together for good to those that believe; that underneath all our hopes and fears and impulses and experiences, as a pilot beneath the swelling of a hundred sails, stands God, with his hand upon the helm. It is he that is steering us, and not we ourselves. I hold that the Christian should look at death with a face as bright and cheerful as sunrise when it meets the darkness of night, irradiating what it faces. I hold, with steadfastness of thought, that every man and woman should stand upon this earth as a bird upon a swaying perch, from which, when shaken by the passing gust, she flies away, finding both her largest opportunity and her highest joy in flight. This is my faith: and, if you ask its source, I say it is born of a clear intellectual apprehension; a firm, abiding confidence in the saving love of God, — that divine, indescribable, inexhaustible love that lives and yearns in God's heart for man. I say it is indescribable; for I know of no love with which to compare it. I know by observation the strength and gravity of a father's love; how it will toil and bear, and make sixty years of life the fulfilment of one wish, — that over his grave his son may mount to something higher and wider than his father knew. I know the patience, the tenderness, the hovering, brooding quality, of a mother's love, which seeks to nestle and screen from every passing harm the objects of her care. I know, too, of that other love which woman bears for man, at the

voice and beck of which father and mother are left, and she goes forth, as an angel following after God, with him whom her soul loveth. This, too, is indescribable. It is eternal also. Its voice is music here; it makes the melody of home; and I know that it is strong enough to send its cry beyond the interval of death, and wake the echoes of the eternal world. But over and above all these, including them all as minor parts of itself, stands the divine love for man. And now, if any of you feel that you would take of this love, either in the way of pardon or sanctification, take ye freely of it. Take it freely, I say, as the earth in summer takes the sunshine, as the nostrils of bird and beast and man take of the air; for, like the sunshine, it is on you all, and it is poured over you all as the air is poured about the earth.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—IMPROVEMENT OF SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITIES.

“AND, WHILE THEY WENT TO BUY, THE BRIDEGROOM CAME; AND THEY THAT WERE READY WENT IN WITH HIM TO THE MARRIAGE; AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT.”—Matt. xxv. 10.

THE lesson taught in this passage is, that, whatever good opportunity comes to man, he should instantly improve it; that, when some fortunate occasion solicits action, he should act, and act, too, on the instant; and that he who fails so to act loses forever the blessings he might have obtained. This is the gist of the passage; and my desire and hope are, so to unfold and apply this subject that you may one and all feel in full force the pressure of the obligation.

The first is, that he who desires to change his course of life, to rectify his example, to reform his conduct, should do so *at once*.

There are questions upon which we should deliberate long and earnestly, and, even after a decision has been reached, enter upon the performance cautiously; but there are other questions which do not relate to the judgment or the deliberative faculties,

but rather to the conscience and the moral faculties, and concerning which the decision should be upon the instant, and the concordant act follow at once. There are things which must be done, if they are to be done at all, when the nature is at white-heat. There are acts born of the slow operation of the understanding, when conviction of duty waits on processes of thought and elaborate investigation: and there are other acts which are not offspring of the understanding, are not born of analysis, but are children of the emotions; and as Minerva leaped full-armed from the brain of Jupiter, so these spring forth from the moral sensibilities, armed and equipped for action. There are decisions which lose by debate,—deliberation emasculates them,—and to which delay is death. Those people who think every thing must be done in cool blood; who think that deliberation lends dignity to the step; who think that man can take no stand unless he meditates upon it, and revolves it in his mind for six months,—such people are greatly mistaken: such people forget what I would call the volcanic element in man,—the enthusiastic and passionate element, which swells and rises in him at times, impelled by some unknown magnetic law, until, with the flame and fervor of an irresistible impulse to which is neither limit nor law save such as is born of itself, it overflows all the ordinary habits of his life, and illuminates his entire nature from base to summit. Poets give one name to it, philosophers another: Christ called it being “born again;” and Paul, delineating its later mani-

festations, described it as "being filled with the Spirit." Call it whatever you severally please, you all know what I mean, and to what I refer. I refer to that keen conviction which pierceth to the joints and marrow of a man's spiritual organism; to that overflowing of the emotions, that rush of the affections toward God, which comes forth from a stony heart as the water leaped from the rock when Moses smote it with his staff; that sublimating of the hopes and desires that have been sordid and base, which makes a person a marvel to himself, and an undeniable witness to the power of God. You know that the noblest exhibitions of your own lives, and the sublimest acts of man as recorded in history, have been born of this moral enthusiasm; born in an instant; born, not of the judgment, but of the emotion, when you were caught up out of yourself, as it were, even as water is scooped from the surface of a lake by the uplifting suction of a whirlwind, and blown upward into the air, where it is no longer water, but a columnar rainbow or a sea of crimson mist. So ever and anon, down through the history of the race, some man, or class of men, has been blown upon of God, and inspired, and made the centre of his uplifting power, and lifted spiritually above the earth into the clear sunlight of an exalted purpose, and been transfigured by it. Now, I say, when a man is so caught up toward heaven; when God has put the arms of a mighty conviction around him, and lifted him out of the pit of his sordidness, upon whose crumbling edge no foot can pause an instant and not slip back-

ward, — that person must not hesitate ; he must not stop to debate : he must *run, run* for his life, if he would not slip, and tumble again into the very pit from which the hand of the Almighty has rescued him. If a miserly man, for instance, is touched with the divine sentiment of humanity ; if, through the voice of a living preacher, some benevolent cause has put its claim before him in such a light that his heart is melted, and an impulse to give, and to give freely, has risen up within him, — let him not hesitate ; let him not delay : let him put his name and amount down at once. That moment is the only gateway through which performance, large in stature as Heaven's requirement, can pass. At that moment he is warmed up to the act ; the claims of God are vividly before his eyes ; conscience is alive ; the fingers of his sordidness are for the moment paralyzed ; he is free from his old bondage to Mammon. For a moment he can act generously. Let him do it, or his old meanness will re-assert its sway over him, and master him. This is the way the human mind acts. Granted that it has lived on a certain level : it is capable of great deeds only at intervals ; and, until such an interval is improved, it will remain on its habitual level, and under the operation of laws that serve to prevent its improvement. This, then, is the truth I urge upon you to-day. If any of you are convicted of duty touching your relation to God and the Church ; if any of you are so pressed upon of God, that you find it hard to remain where you are, and are compelled to brace yourselves, lest you be swept all of

a sudden, as it were, onward to an open and public confession ; if any of you feel that morally, as fathers and mothers, as husbands and wives, as individuals before God, you have come to a crisis in your lives, and must, in your own minds, make a positive decision for or against religion, — I warn you that your course is suicidal. You are rebelling not only against God, but against the laws of your own mind. You are ignoring the plainest connection between motives and acts. You should not debate the matter a moment. You should not delay an instant. You should rise, and say, “ Lord, here I am : take me and use me.”

The chances now are all in your favor. The balances incline perceptibly to your side of the scale. You have reached the very borders of the stream. All your energies are gathered for the leap. Your pastor is present to give you the word, and God himself ready to help. Now is the time for you to jump. Delay will change the conditions against you. The stream will widen with years, the current grow deeper and darker, your mind lose its courage, the voice best calculated to give you the word pass away into the silence of distance or of death, and you will be, in the closing hour of your life, on the wrong side of the stream. My friend, believe me, “ *now is your accepted time ; now is your hour of salvation.*”

Again : I ask you to observe that the character of a person's past life may be such, — and in the case of nearly all of us it doubtless is such, — that sudden, instantaneous action is his only salvation.

There are two classes of sins. The one may be called sins of the perceptive faculties; sins of error; sins of ignorance; sins of prejudice; sins from which man cannot be delivered at once, unless, as in the case of Paul, God breaks over his ordinary methods of procedure, and condenses what is the result of years of ordinary life into the experience of a few days or hours. In many points, our conversion is slow. Our reformation waits on education and the leisurely growth of our understanding. There are sins so minute, so far off, so mingled and shaded into the very atmosphere of our life, that, as in the case of the eye distinguishing distant objects at sea, the conscience beholds them only after long practice; only when, after long exercise, its powers have been trained up to the maximum of capacity. This is one class of sins; and from such we are delivered slowly, and only as we "grow in knowledge and grace."

But there is another class of sins, — sins of the passions, of habit, of appetite, of indulgence of the animal instincts, — from which deliverance comes, if at all, through a decisive, instantaneous act of the will. The fly is wise in its instinct when it seeks with buzzing and violence to break suddenly away from the spider's web in which it finds itself unexpectedly entangled. It must break out, or die. And that person who finds himself or herself caught in the meshes of some temptation that the Devil has spun, and skilfully suspended in his path; who finds himself webbed in with wicked desires, and his mind

being rapidly swathed in sinful thoughts, — such a person, I say, must learn a lesson from the entrapped fly, and burst peremptorily away from the encircling danger. In such a case, reflection is death. A month, a week, a single hour even, wasted in debate, and his freedom is lost. There are diseases — such as weakness of the organs, taints of blood, broken bones, dislocated limbs — which only time, acting in conjunction with other remedial agents, can cure. But, as you all know, now and then there is generated in the human body such a foreign substance, prolific of such antagonisms to the person's life, that the surgeon's knife must be called in to deal with it. Nothing short of excision will answer, and that, too, at once. The delay of a month, a week, perhaps an hour, would take even the possibility of recovery from the patient. It is precisely so morally. There are diseases in man's moral structure, taints from an ancestral blood, hereditary weaknesses, dislocated faculties, which time and the grace of God both can alone remove: we must wait with what patience we may command, until the operation of the Spirit shall purge us free of them. But, on the other hand, a spiritual disorder is occasionally developed in us, so swift and deadly in its action, so infectious, and prolific of further disturbance, that whoever would save his soul must deliver himself from it at once. If any of you recognize the analysis as correct; if any of you see in it a personal application; if any of you feel like saying to yourself, "Good God, that is my case!" — I tell you, friend, I have

mapped out the only plan that will save your life. If any of you feel that the fires of unlawful passion have been kindled in you, or if an appetite for intoxicating drinks is already so advanced that its craving is beginning to be felt, you ought to understand that the time for you to *deliberate* is past, and the hour for you to *act* is come. It is now, and before the benediction is pronounced upon you at the close of this service, that you who drink wine and ale, and love to drink them, ought to be total-abstinence men. You are the very men who cannot be moderate drinkers. When a man begins to love liquor, then it is that he should stop entirely. The time to put out a fire is the instant when it shows itself. I saw the Adelphi Theatre burn the last winter. I stood within twenty feet of the doorway, and saw the sea of fire roll and surge within. How it roared and eddied and flared! The walls stood, and within was one seething whirlwind of flame. There were six engines playing at their fullest pressure at once; and the water was forced through the hose in streams that tore the slating from the roof, and started the bricks along the edges of the walls. I never before saw water driven through the air with such violence. Yet that torrent of water made no impression whatever on the flames: they only flared the higher. The gale was roaring over the top of the walls; and the suction upward was such, that I saw the solid streams from the hose, the moment they passed within the line of bricks, fringe out. The thin spray was actually lifted upward, and borne away upon the cur-

rent of flame. No human power, no effort of man, could stop that conflagration. The building was doomed. Yet there was a time, an hour before, when a child's hand and a single basin of water would have saved that building. It is just so, friends, with man, touching his appetites and his passions. He must not allow them to gather headway, and flame up in him: he must smother them in the earlier stages of their manifestation, before they have begun to rage. You can manage a fire; but you cannot a conflagration.

There is an appalling amount of carelessness in these matters. Indulgence is made a fine art; and men study and experiment how much they can stand, and keep their respectability. The line is drawn mighty fine in some cases too! It must needs be a pretty sharp-pointed pencil that would trace a distinction between gluttony and "generous living," between drunkenness and "moderate drinking," between speculation and gambling.

The only safe way touching this class of sins is to break short off. Not one man in a thousand can sin moderately on the lower, the animal side of his nature. He can sin in his intellect, and keep his balance; but few men indeed can sin in their passions and in their appetites, and not be swept away. That person who allows grossness to get the mastery over him; who lives chiefly in his sensations; whose instincts have become debauched, so that, voluntarily and involuntarily, he desires wickedness, — that man is lost. You might as well strive to re-gather the

fragrance of a flower from the ashes into which it has been burnt as to re-form virtue from the ashes and cinders of his reputation.

Once more I remark, that we owe something more to man and God than change: we owe confession and reparation. When a man has been doing wrong; when, through a long series of years, he has been living contrary to the will of God; when he has, for the best half of his life, thrown the influence of his example against religion as applied to individual experience, — he owes to his own soul, to society, and to God, something more than reformation. He should make a public confession of his wrong conduct. He should come out frankly, and say, “I wish all of you business-men who have known me, all you who are my clerks, and all you who have been my companions, to know that I have not been living as a man should live in a Christian land; I have not acted as a man with gospel privileges should act; and I desire that all of you should know that I have repented of my wrong conduct, and begun to live a new and better life.” When a man says that, he honors God, takes a great burden off his own conscience, and makes his example right before men. He has done a vast deal more than reform his own life: he has set influences in motion which are calculated to reform other men’s lives. He has become a preacher of salvation in the best possible way, — even by complying with the terms of salvation himself. He has repented, and been baptized: and his baptism is, before men, the best evidence of his sincerity and earnestness; for

all his acquaintances know that he never would have taken that step if he had not been thoroughly wrought upon and affected. They hear that Mr. So or So has joined the church ; and they whisper it around among themselves ; and they say, " Well, well, there must be something in religion, after all, or he never would have done what he has done." The rumor spreads from store to store. His old friends speak of it as they meet on the streets or in the cars : a few treat it as a joke ; but most mention it soberly and reverently. That man's confession has given the Holy Ghost a foothold in a hundred hearts. You see how it works, friends, and that a person has no right to keep as a secret what the honor of God and the welfare of men demand should be made public. If a worn-out, dyspeptic, and consumptive man goes into the Adirondacks, and the climate agrees with him, his cough disappears, and his lost appetite comes back with a vengeance, until he eats like an Indian, and is amazed at his own performances in that line, and spends the time between meals wondering how he can hold so much, and the whole camp feel just as he does about it, and after two months he comes out thirty pounds heavier than when he went in, his face swarth, his blood pure as old wine, his eye clear and bright, and his whole body filled with the divine buoyancy of health, — if such a man comes out of the woods, and says to himself just before he reaches home, " Now, I don't think I will say any thing about this matter ; I am wonderfully changed, it is true ; but I don't think I had better say much about it ; it don't concern any-

body but myself ;” and so, when he meets a business-friend on the street the next morning, who hails him, “ Well, well, I never saw such a change in my life ; I scarcely knew you ; how much better you look !” and he says, while he draws down his face, and lays his hand on his chest, and tries as hard as he can to cough, “ Well, I don’t know but I may be a *little* better ; I suppose I do look better if you say I do ; but I am badly off, very badly off indeed, sir,” — what would you think of such a man ? What name would you give to his conduct ? Is there any thing frank or honorable about it ? How ungrateful, how dishonest, it is ! What, then, shall we say of that man who has been blessed with the gospel all his life, whose mind has been instructed out of it, whose soul has been healed of its weaknesses and diseases, whose whole spiritual nature has been renovated and purified, and who even hopes that his sins have been forgiven by the blood of Christ, — what must we think of that man, when he conceals the blessed change that has come over his mind, and neither honors God nor benefits men by telling them how much he has been helped and improved ?

And so I say to you who have of late begun to live more correctly, who have been greatly blessed by the ministrations of the gospel, and who are secretly cherishing a hope, Make public confession of whatever God has done for you ; tell men of the change that has come over you ; and let the influence of your reformation, and all the moral effect of it, be felt in your family, in the church, and on the world at large.

Unpublished reformation, a hope in Christ cherished in reticence and secrecy, is like an eagle to whose body nature has added no growth of wings: it is denied the powers, privileges, and pleasures which belong to its nature, needed for its support, and demanded by its opportunities.

And now, before I close, — and I close with the heaviness upon me that all I have said may have been spoken in vain, — let me speak to you of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Oh, how it eats into man like a cancer! How it blinds his eyes! How it stops his ears! How it undermines his virtue! How it blasts and withers all the grace and ornament of his manhood! How it takes the very grace and ribbon of his life, and makes it to be like a soiled and unseemly rag! It is a terrible thing to be a sinner even for a moment, — even to the least extent. But what shall I say in description of a life of sin, of long years spent in transgression, of those enormous crimes, of those flagrant commissions, against the Decalogue, of those ocean-like and bottomless depravities upon whose upheavings thousands are being wrecked, and whose depths are white with the ghastly evidences of moral overthrow? Warehouses and mansions can be rebuilt; ships may be lost, and yet the sea remain white with sails; the skill and energy of man can make good material overthrown, — yea, above the charred and blackened ruins, erect a larger and more imposing structure: but who can regain his soul when lost? who lift into their old places the prostrate columns of his fallen nature? who re-gather, and form anew,

the fragments of his shattered virtue? No one. This is the work of God, and not of man. If any of you are to be restored; if the marks that sin has made upon you are ever to be removed, and the long-lost beauty of holiness come back to your soul, — the health-imparting touch of Christ must be felt upon you. At least the hem of his garment must sway against you, or you will never be healed.

I hope none of you will get the idea that it is a little thing to repent. It is no slight work to break up fallow ground. When you hitch three stout pairs of oxen ahead of a plough that sinks a furrow twenty inches in depth into the hard, stony, unpulverized soil, how the roots, that make a lace-work of opposition under the sward, snap! How the stones heave up under the beam! How the old stumps and snags crash as the teamster cracks his whip, and puts the whole strength of his team in a steady strain upon the chain! That is what I call a revolution in the soil, — a kind of civil war among the roots. And when the field is ploughed, and the farmer casts his eye over it, and sees what a wilderness of roots and stumps and stones he has turned up, he wipes his face, and says, "That is what I call thorough work." Yes: it is thorough work. And when the Spirit of God has entered the point of conviction into the very subsoil of a man's sinfulness, and the work of repentance is begun, what a mesh-work of evil desires lurking beneath the swarded surface of his life is revealed! What stony insensibilities are rooted out of him! What deeply-bedded and snaggy habits are torn out!

What stump-like transgressions are overturned! And, when he has made a clean breast of it, wiping the tears from his eyes, and looking over the field of his confessed sins, he says, "I had no idea that the record of my life looked like that; I had no idea that there was such a mass of sin in me as that; I had no idea that there was any such amount of buried and concealed opposition to God in me as I see thrown up and lying exposed before me."

Nor had he. Satan's great object is, not to let men see how wicked they are. Every death-bed has a revelation, — to the impenitent, a revelation of horror and surprise. They never saw sin in its true light until then; they never realized how unfit they were to meet God. You might as well expect a pawnbroker to tell you the true value of a jewel as to expect that the Devil will give you the true estimate of a holy character.

And now I will tell you what is the result of my observation. Men do not differ greatly in their moral nature. In all are the same sinful inclinations, the same liability to err, the same temptations to wicked indulgence. Every sprout from the old stock has the same poisonous sap in it. Every twig naturally terminates in a thorn. "We are all gone out of the way: there is none that doeth good; no, not one." Where men differ is in their willingness to recover themselves from their evil courses; and if you would weigh men and women accurately, if you would discern between the good and the base, observe how they act after transgression. We are all liable to sin;

but he who is noble, who has any of the divine leaven in him, is quick to repent of his sin. And when a person has erred, when he has transgressed, I care not how grievously, and I see him making efforts to recover himself, and hear him say, "Yes, I have sinned; I have transgressed; I have been doing wrong all my life; but here I take my stand, and with God's help I mean to live as I ought to live;" when I hear him exclaim, "No more transgression for me, no more unlawful indulgence of passions, no more living down there on the low level of appetite; henceforth I wed myself to virtue," — I say, friends, when you hear a person saying that, look well at him; for before you you behold a *man*.

And now, friends and strangers, the mercy of God is present in this house, and the hour of your death is not far off. The pages of your lives are blotted with the record of transgressions numberless, and your natures are full of iniquities. The time for you to repent is come. Repent, then, all of you, and change the course of your lives, or the evil will come upon you when you wot not, and the summons will be sounded when you are not prepared. Behold, the voice of the Bridegroom can be heard in our streets, and his cry has entered into your hearts. Rise up, then, all of you, and trim your lamps, and enter in with him to the feast, or else the door will be shut, and you will stand without, and fill the whole world with the wailing of your cries.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—KINDLY AFFECTIONS THE EVIDENCE OF TRUE PIETY.

“BE KINDLY AFFECTIONED ONE TO ANOTHER WITH BROTHERLY LOVE.”—Rom. xii. 10.

THIS is one of those sentences which bring out in the plainest possible light the beautiful character of Christianity. The object of Christ's teaching and life was to unite men in the bonds of human impulse; to beget and foster amiable tempers in the human heart; to implant such principles in the souls of men, that at last all men should be united in an actual brotherhood. Up to his coming, men had stood apart each from the other: selfishness had made them divergent. Ambition bred antagonisms; and the world grew fuller of wickedness and bloodshed as the years advanced. Even religion seemed to engender hostility, and the altars of every god smoked with the offering of human blood.

It was left for the Christian religion to inaugurate a new era. By precept and example, Christ set himself squarely against the old state of things. To justice he subjoined mercy, and to morality he added tender-

ness. He said, in substance, "It is not enough for you to deal justly with each other; it is not enough for you to help each other in distress: you must *love* one another; you must have an actual feeling of kindness in your heart toward every human being."

My friends, there are those in our day who profess to love what is lovely in human nature and conduct, whose sympathies are undeniably for man, but who nevertheless scout at the Christian religion, and refuse honor to Him who gave unto it both its name and the amiable spirit which animates it. I marvel that they do not see, that, in ignoring Jesus, they ignore the very source of all that they profess to admire. If scholars, if they have read history with any advantage to their knowledge, they must certainly know, that, previous to the Christian religion, there was neither a religion nor a philosophy which was able to make men even humane. The humanities that they so applaud, and which I rejoice to know many of them exemplify, are, one and all, the outgrowth of Christian soil: all are due to the teaching and influence of Him whom they so loudly reject. They admire charity; but charity sprang from the cross. They eulogize liberty; but the blood of the Redeemer is the only solvent able to melt the fetter of the slave. They exhort to self-denial; but neither in Socrates nor Plato, neither in Brahmin nor Confucius, can they find the example which stimulates it. They preach of universal brotherhood; but from no other lips than the lips of Him who first proclaimed the obligation of fraternal love can they find a text upon

which to base their exhortations. Of books the world has had no lack; of prophet and teacher each age has had its share: but in the gospel, and the gospel alone, in the centuries this side of the great event which marked a new epoch in human history, can they find the lesson and the man able to inculcate and proclaim the doctrines needed for the realization of their hopes.

The object, then, of Christian teaching and influence, is to establish and confirm such affections in the hearts of men as shall prevent bitterness and antagonism, and build up a kingdom and brotherhood of peace. In the accomplishment of this, we behold the fulfilment of the gospel endeavor.

Now, I am free to confess that this has never been realized, even in the Christian Church. Our experience testifies that we have never known such a church, — a church entirely and absolutely free from dissensions, alienation, and unfriendliness. The nearest we have ever, as yet, come to it, is such a state of mutual restraint and forbearance, that the open manifestation of unfriendliness was prevented. But silence is not harmony, and absence of scandal is not brotherly unity. We have never known a church, I say, in which pique and rivalry, sourness of temper and lack of sympathy, did not exist. In other words, the Christian religion has never as yet received a full and necessary expression even in the action of those professing it. I allude to this painful fact, not to upbraid any one, not to implicate any one, not out of any desire to say a sharp and biting thing, but solely

for the purpose of knowing just where we stand. I make the statement purely in the interest of truth, and that I may point out the remedy.

The first point I make, then, is this, — that we do not adequately express our religion. Christianity is more beautiful than it is seen to be in our persons. Seen through the medium of our lives, it appears, to those who gaze, like a sun shorn of its beams: it is suffering an eclipse. We should recognize this failure. We should say, “This thing will never do. Nineteen centuries are enough to have brought out something better than I see around me; yea, and something better than I see in my own heart. If there is any latent power, any beautiful but unrevealed state, in Christianity, waiting for the hour of its manifestation, waiting for a man to demonstrate it, then this is the hour, and I am the man.”

This, then, is my first suggestion, — that the path by which the world is to reach a fuller realization of the beauty and force of Christianity lies through a fuller development of amiable dispositions in the individual. My friends, men are not, and never will be, converted *en masse*. One soul at a time is the fulfilment of the law of grace. The beauty and fragrance of a garden come by the blossoming of many flowers, not one: one huge flower can never make a garden. Each flower is made up of many leaves, not of one; and each passes through every stage of growth until it reaches its complete fulness. So it is with man. How is a man converted? All at once? No. Holy habits are formed as a tree puts on its

dress of leaves, — one at a time. Evil is overcome in detail. Our exercises are not in the form of one great battle, in which we win or lose all at once : they are more like a campaign, into which enter many battles, sieges, assaults, retreats, and victories. Christianity must have a higher, a fuller, a richer development in your soul and mine, my hearer, before it has it in the world. If the drops withheld themselves from the river, there would be no river. We pray that mankind may be more kindly disposed one toward another ; that wars and contention may cease ; that love and peace may reign supreme everywhere. And yet we allow harshness and prejudice and passion, that provoke strife and disagreement, to reign in our own bosom. We adjourn the millennium continually. We put it off, and picture it the destiny of the future. We think of it as a remote event, that we are never to see or feel. This is wrong. The millennium will be a matter of personal experience before it can be a matter of universal experience. When the soul is at peace with God and man, when the passions that cause strife are subdued, when the tempers that breed contention are banished, then has that soul entered into the millennial state. It is not something to wait for : it is realized. Heaven is not something, then, to which you are to be carried : it has come to you. The future has, then, no change, no joy, save such as come in the way of growth and experience.

Now, there are many, apparently, to whom religion does not mean this. They are not gentle and amiable. They do not grow merciful and loving and

gracious as they grow in years. They are harsh and knotty and crabbed. Their piety is a kind of gnarled piety, a wart-like piety, which is useless; for God does not make his saints out of veneer, but out of solid wood. About all the advance some church-members make is to grow stiffer and more set in their intellectual opinions. The years add only to their pugnacity. They are theological vultures, and can scent heresy thirty miles away. They seem to delight in opposing and being opposed. A novel expression, a new manner of stating an old truth in a sermon, is a godsend to them. If they can find something to worry over, to be alarmed at, they are happy. They must be thoroughly wilful and obstinate, and anxious and miserable, or they feel that they fail in duty.

Now, friends, the Church has too many of such people already. She does not need another one. The cause of Christ does not need partisans, but disciples, — men willing to learn and imbibe of the spirit of Jesus. A wicked temper is just as wicked shown in a church-meeting as it is when shown on the dock or in a store. A spiteful prayer damns a soul more than an oath. Meanness, with zeal for religion as a mask, is at least as bad as meanness elsewhere. A bad life is worse than a bad creed.

Now, nature suggests, and the Bible enjoins, that men be kindly affectioned one toward another. To this we are prompted by many considerations. We all have one Father, essentially one nature, one life, one destiny. These should make us to be sympa-

thetic. The old mariners had this saying, "Cursed be the hand that pushes a shipmate overboard!" You catch the thought of the adjuration. They were united in the bonds of like perils, like hopes, like labors. Living in a world of similar conditions, they must breathe the air of harmony. Even brutes of the same blood dwell in peace. How, then, shall men quarrel? What right have we to turn against each other, rebelling even against the law of a common nature? No right at all. A man who can do it is not a Christian: he is a barbarian.

Now, there is one very unfortunate fact in the history of the Church, to which I have already called your attention; and it is this, — that, in every age since the apostolic, it has never been at peace within itself. Prejudice and passion and turbulent tempers have grown up with its growth. The tares have grown with the wheat. Great value has been set upon the intellectual expression of its doctrines; and that is right: but too little attention has been paid to the development of its inward, spiritual life; and this is wrong. Men have thought and stated the truth more correctly than they have lived it. The close and harmonious connection which should exist between the perceptions and the emotions has been thereby lost; and discordance has been the result. Men have journeyed to conflict and antagonism along the path of nature, and not of grace. By nature, man is positive, and proud of his opinions, self-asserting, and arrogant. It is a very fine line that divides firmness from obstinacy; and many have passed over without

knowing it. Christians, even, have lost the disposition of love one for another in their adherence to what seemed to either party to be the best and only form in which to state the truth. You are familiar with history; and you know that even in this city, since it was founded, many instances have occurred illustrating this tendency to sink the Christian in the theologian, the disciple in the disputant, the missionary in the bigot. The treatment of the earlier Baptists and Quakers is a case in point. When those who bear the name of Christ can persecute people, it is sure evidence that their views of what constitutes faithfulness to God are radically wrong. Charity is faithfulness: brotherly love is loyalty to Jesus.

You see, therefore, that it is not enough to refrain from feeling unkindly toward people. It is not enough not to hate or hurt a man: you should love him and benefit him. Indifference is not Christianity: it is not even humanity. The sun must do more than give light sufficient to reveal itself: it must shine upon orbs that would otherwise be forever dark; it must search every sod of earth with its vivifying warmth; it must compel the rose to fragrance, and extort sweetness even from the brier. So it is with us. We must communicate the light in our own life to others. We must warm cold, inert natures into growth. We must make our hearts to other hearts what the magnet is to the sand into which it is thrust. We must impel their senseless natures toward us, and charge them to the full with our own properties.

There are some here, I trust, who are growing up to become preachers. Some of you are preachers already. To such, I say, My friends, if you wish to make a man better, you must make him love you first. Nineteen out of every twenty men hear through their affections. They listen and give heed to you because they like you. You must get their confidence before you get their ear. Only lovable men and women can be serviceable to Christ; and we must raise up a class of workers in the Church who will impress the world with their goodness, their amiability, their purity, their whole-hearted manliness, before we shall ever do much toward converting the world. The crabbed, harsh, prim, snappish people are hinderances, and not helps, no matter what their intentions are. They give an evil advertisement to religion; they sow the seeds of misunderstanding and dislike; they are marplots to every good enterprise.

This, then, is the premium that God offers for spiritual development,—usefulness. To do good, be good. Cherish kindly feeling toward people: let them perceive that you do. Have a warm grasp, and a bright, cheerful face, for every one. Because a man will not go in your path, do not stone him and call him hard names. To abuse another's piety is a sorry way to prove your own. What a contradiction of sinners Christ experienced! How they reviled him! How they lied about him! They said that he was a "wine-bibber and a glutton." They jeered at him as a "friend of publicans and sinners."

They insisted that he did his miracles with the help of the Devil. There was nothing wicked and hard and mean that they did not say about him. But, when "reviled, he reviled not again:" he kept about his blessed work. How it stirs the heart of one of his followers to read how he conducted himself under such treatment! From the supreme peacefulness of his own heart he looked out upon them and their abuse as a child looks forth from a window on a stormy day when the rain splashes in gusts against the panes, and the air is full of the wild sobbings of the storm. Their raging could not disturb the serenity of his bosom. His character made a great impression even on his enemies. Its influence was felt even in the Sanhedrim. It caused even Pilate to hesitate: he shrank from ordering this Galilean peasant to the cross. It was not so much his record as it was his character that vindicated him before that tribunal; and he went from the presence of the Roman governor to his death—and the Roman knew it—an innocent man.

Is it not possible, friends, that we need to be more impressed with the value of piety as expressed in the character, and not as evidenced in intellectual convictions? Do we *feel* rightly? Are our dispositions equal to our understanding? Are we better theologians than we are Christians? While we have been worrying so much about doctrines, have we lost the true practice? Well, let every heart answer.

I shrink from expressing what in substance I have repeatedly said to you; but I do wish to declare and

place before you my abiding conviction, that intellectual arrogance is very unseemly in a student of God's word and world at the present stage of interpretation and development. Do not forget that "we see through a glass darkly," and not, as yet, "face to face." God has never given unto any one man, or class of men, to know all his will, or the application of that will to human affairs. You might as well expect that one pair of lungs could inhale the whole atmosphere, as that one mind, or class of minds, could receive the perfect apprehension of the divine nature. Knowledge of God and of godliness grows with the growth of the human mind, and suffers, and must always suffer, from the limitation of our faculties. Our Father in heaven will appear to each successive generation of men more and more vast and majestic as they are educated into wider views and higher conceptions of spiritual forces. The warmth and sensitiveness of the divine nature will never be appreciated until man's own nature has been assimilated to it. Affection can alone appreciate affection, and tenderness understand tenderness. Formulas become unsatisfactory, and are laid aside, because the Holy Ghost is continually working out fuller and richer developments in the soul; and this spiritualization of the thoughts and emotions of man is better than all formulas, and above all creeds. The sap, you see, becomes too abundant: new channels are needed; and so the trunk expands; branch after branch is added to accommodate the pressure from within. As the soul grows into the purely spiritual, it rises beyond the

need of verbal reliance. At death the departing soul must rely on a personal Saviour, and not on a system of truth, however correct. We are all being graduated out of the study of text-books into a larger and nobler world and life of independent thought and impulse. When we have reached the full measure of the stature of Christ, we shall need no more the prop of written revelation. In heaven the Bible will be lived, not read. There the holiness of its injunctions is incorporated into character; and, in the presence of God, all verbal interpretations of him are out of place. There the Deity interprets himself; there the soul apprehends him instinctively, as our senses do fragrance and color here; and definition — that needed resort of enfeebled minds and sluggish consciences — is not known.

I love to think of truth unapprehended to-day, but destined at some future date to be mine. The endlessness of eternity is to me a delightful thought, because it suggests a ceaseless studentship and unlimited growth. The more I grow in knowledge of God's will and man's wants, the more I feel that it is impossible for any collection of words to type and express the Deity as he is to man in Jesus. Nothing is more essential in my judgment than a creed, — a written statement of belief. It answers many desirable ends: it supplies strength to the weak, a restraint to the reckless, and a cable to the buffeted. But I never yet have seen a creed which satisfied my mind or soul, — a statement which expressed the divine nature in any such fulness as I conceive of it,

nor human nature in any such depth of need and necessity as I know it to exist. Nor do I feel that I have proceeded along any line so far as to have come anywhere near to its termination; and subjects which I once thought I had mastered, I now feel I have never half examined. The sea I sounded yesterday has become bottomless to-day; and, if I ever had arrogance of opinion, a growing sense of ignorance is driving it from my mind. Feeling, therefore, that I have not discovered every star, I have great respect for the telescopes of others. I dare to say that many who think in some respects differently from myself will have a longer catalogue of starry truths at the close of life as the reward of greater diffidence as to their conclusions, and greater patience to watch and wait.

I have entered thus into an exposition of my own personal feelings in the hope that those near my own age in this audience, of equally positive intellectual temperaments, may be withheld from an offensive bigotry of opinion and a harshness of judgment toward those of dissimilar views. Cherish always charity to those who are intellectually unsettled; be steadfast, but never obstinate, in adherence to your own conclusions; condemn no one, however widely astray he may be as you judge, who is seeking honestly for light. Piti-ful indeed is it to see a man grope with bandaged eyes; but sadder yet is it to behold the gropings of a dark-ened mind. The position which the evangelical churches and preachers in this city should take toward such is clear as sunlight. The Sermon on the

Mount is the pivot upon which we should all balance : with that for our fulcrum, and spiritual activities for our lever, ignorance and error, and that denunciatory bigotry which is often in this city called "liberalism," will eventually be lifted, and toppled over. The glacial period in the theological world is past. Men of opposite convictions will not be crushed and pulverized into unity. The courtesy of charity, the winning gentleness of Christ, the more abundantly outpoured influence of the Spirit, will accomplish what hammers and smiting will never effect. I sincerely hope that the day of wrangling and fighting is past, and that the spirit and Christ-like life will henceforth be relied on to convert the world. I believe that there is a common ground on which humane men and women of all denominations, and of no denomination, of most antagonistic doctrinal belief, shall come harmoniously together, and labor shoulder to shoulder for the improvement of the morals of this city. I see no reason, — and I have given the subject some thought, — I see no reason why a Baptist, an Episcopalian, and a Congregationalist, should not work together in an effort to bandage a broken limb ; or why Park-street Church and Horticultural Hall should not unite in a noble ambition to cleanse the filth and clothe the naked of North Street. I have no idea that Mr. Emerson and myself, were we standing, by chance, side by side on the bank of a river, would not dash with a common impulse into the current to rescue a boat-load of drowning children ; nor do I see any reason that should stand a single moment in the way to pre-

vent the union of the intellectual and moral forces that we may chance to represent, in order to save from a worse than watery grave the bodies and souls of the thousands in this city who are being swamped in a wilder and deeper sea. And I wish to leave here and now on record my belief, that such a union will eventually be made, — made in safety to all, and for the good of all ; and that any method of expression in our pulpits, any style of teaching, any verbal bitterness, any arrogance of opinion, which tends to defer and make impossible such a union of forces, seems to me most unfortunate, and a wicked ignoring of existing facts.

My friends, there is a certain amount of humane impulse in the world, to the increase of which we should each contribute our share. A man who has lived, and by his life added nothing to the sympathy of the world, has lived in vain. To sweeten the moral atmosphere by the fragrance of your life ; to teach men the lesson of toleration and charity, — that hardest lesson to learn ; to speak so kindly of opponents as to make others ashamed to treat their enemies harshly ; to bear so patiently your burden as to prevent others from complaining, — is not the least part of man's duty. And yet many seem incapable of appreciating the morally corrective influence of such a life. They act as if the harmony of the spheres consisted in a combination of thunder-bolts, and he were the best contributor to the universal melody who shakes the world with the violence of concussions ; and so they flash and thunder away with an electric energy, expend-

ing all their force against opposing persons and creeds. They plant no tree to shade the weariness of coming times from future heats ; they revive no withered fields with the distillation of dewy influences ; they make no opening through the thorny hedge of human differences which shall serve as a gateway for the race to enter the fields of plenty and of peace. Against this barbaric element, as expressed in human nature, Christ came to array himself. The cradles of the world needed a new model to pattern after ; and so he lived. The past could not be changed ; the present was hostile and stubborn : in the future lay his only chance. He realized it, and, with the instinct of a prophet, exclaimed, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." What was this but saying, "You adults are hard and intractable ; you have been educated wrongly ; your heroism is but animal fierceness ; your piety is cruel intolerance, your religion harsh and bigoted. I have come unto you in the simplicity of a frank and sinless nature, and you will not receive me : you love darkness rather than light. Be it so. Give me the children ; let them come to me ; let them see me ; I will be their ideal, and they shall grow up like me ; they will read my words when I am gone ; they will hear of my death ; fame will speak to them of my deeds ; and I will put my spirit in their hearts, and a new type of manhood and womanhood shall be known in the world" ? In this lies the secret of his craving for the children. The hope of the world lay in the cradles ; and to the cra-

dles he turned yearningly, and made his pathetic appeal. What a fulfilment his hope has had ! He has become the ideal of all the world knows of goodness and truth ; and mothers all over the globe are bringing their children to him. Over how many cradles will mothers sing of Christ to-night ! by the side of how many couches will little hands be clasped ! in how many chambers, near and far, will infant lips be taught to pray ! and, when the sun shall again appear in the east, — I never wonder that the ancients pictured him as a god, and seated him in a car, — when the sun, I say, shall again appear in the east, the globe will have been belted with one prolonged sound of prayer, and your little child shall only assist that declaration of praise whose line has gone out to all the earth, and whose words have reached to the end of the world.

And now, my friends, what is the lesson of this position ? It is this, — all harshness of speech, all captiousness, all suspicion, all bigotry, all unfriendliness of thought and utterance, all fault-finding, all judgment unsupported by knowledge, or, if so supported, nevertheless uncalled for, are but personal, and, so far as the public are influenced, public lapses into barbarism, — that barbarism that was before Christ came. Its tendency in a church or a family, or in social life, is all one way, and a bad way at that. I enter my protest as a man and as a Christian against it ; I re-enforce my protest with the words of Him, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose, when he said to his disciples,

“Judge not, lest ye be judged;” and to this, with cumulative emphasis, I add the command of the apostle, “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.”

I know to whom I speak. I speak advisedly, and address my words to those in whose hearts they may the longest abide. I speak to you whose characters are forming, whose natures are yet plastic, and are being shaped by the touch of every impression; to you whose piety is typical, because it foreshadows what the piety of the future shall be; I speak to you who are nobly ambitious to incorporate in your lives the purest elements of the New Testament, — the purity, the self-sacrifice, the patience, the charity, which shine out of and illumine all its pages. Selecting these, and whatever of intellectual humility and kindly feelings this discourse has advocated, I bring them all together, like threads perfect in their whiteness, and weave them into one broad banner. With whatever resolution I may command for the staff, I plant it here in this pulpit to-day. Here, where Griffin preached and prayed, upholding the faith once delivered to the saints, without bitterness to any; here, where Stone for seventeen years proclaimed liberty for the slave, and exemplified courtesy to men, — I plant, I say, with whatever warmth of heart and strength of will I have, this standard and this banner, and call upon you to rally to it. The staff may part; the standard may fall: but the folds of the banner shall never be rent, or the banner itself droop; for, in the hour of peril, angel-hands,

white as its own folds, shall bear it up, until not alone you, but this whole city, joined in one humane and reverent brotherhood, shall stand with you beneath it, and, with uncovered heads and uplifted faces, say, "This is the banner of our God."

SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 3, 1872.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—ABHORRENCE OF EVIL.

“ABHOR THAT WHICH IS EVIL.”—Rom. xii. 9.

THERE are some words that are pictures. They appeal to the imagination. Around them the mind groups collateral associations. Such a word is “love.” It does not stand alone, but as the central figure of a group. It is not a single conception: it is the one clearly-defined tree of the foreground, with a landscape of a thousand objects back of and around it. Love suggests father and mother, brother and sister, parent and child, friend and lover, home, and a long train of domestic associations. Take, again, the word “war.” You cannot isolate the word from the fierce group of horrors which cling around it. There are blood and death, famine and conflagration, and the hoarse roar of battle, in the word; and the imagination must take in all these, and press them home upon the consciousness, before one can realize what is meant by the word “war.” Now, the Bible is full of these words that are verbal pictures. He who reads the Scripture with the reason and judg-

ment alone can never be impressed with its *power*; but read, not with one faculty, or class of faculties, but with every faculty, and it becomes a sublime and terrible instrument to affect the mind and heart.

Now, this word "abhor" belongs to that class of words which appeal to the imagination. Etymologically, it means to bristle; to stand on end with fright or excitement; to be repelled from an object with the violent force of an uncontrollable aversion and repugnance. Now, Paul was a scholar and a linguist. His vocabulary was enriched with the knowledge of many tongues. He was a dealer in words, as all public speakers and writers are. He weighed his expressions as an ancient money-changer did his coin. He selected his shaft from a full quiver, like an adroit archer. He shot to kill. A great part of the intellectual pleasure derived from a perusal of Paul's writings comes from the power and accuracy of his language. His words are picked words. Like soldiers selected to carry a point that must be captured, they are full of vigor and power, — full of an irrepressible energy. They smite like cannon-balls; they come down upon the conscience like a ponderous battle-axe on a helmet; they are aimed with the unerring precision of a rifle-bullet. It is impossible for guilt to read the Pauline epistles, and not shrink and cry out. He uses single words as no other writer that I have ever read. The study of Paul's vocabulary is the study of theology. You sink with his phrases to the depth of human depravity; you rise

as with wings that lift you with a majesty of motion to the air where the glorified of God alone soar.

Now, suppose one wishes to understand and obey this injunction; suppose he wishes to learn what is the relation and sentiment of a Christian soul toward evil: what must he do? Evidently this: Ascertain what this word "abhor" means; what is the diameter of the circumference which includes all its significance; what is the measure of feeling which corresponds to the term here used. Knowledge of this is the first step toward obedience.

Now, every one of us desires to know just what should be our feeling toward evil; for conduct is but the expression of feeling. As a man feels, he acts. There is no real virtue, above the level of fear, that is higher than the convictions. Fear modifies action: but release man from fear, and he will act himself out precisely; for an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit.

Now, Paul is giving to the Christians of the Church at Rome just what they all needed, — a true measure of feeling by which to be guided in their conduct toward evil. It was a very practical direction. Evil was all around them: they saw it in the system of government then prevailing, in the behavior of the rich, in the licentiousness of society, in the violence of the rabble. We may well suppose that many times, individually and as a body, they had longed to go to the apostle, as to the highest authority, and say, "Tell us how we are to feel toward sin; give us some invariable rule, some definite instruction,

to guide us in this matter." We must remember, that, at the time when this epistle was written, Christianity was in a crude state. The New Testament, as we have it, was not known. The churches had no collocation of Sacred Scriptures to which to go, as we have, for direction. Christianity was in its infancy. As a system of truth, as a teacher of ethics, it was being formed. Paul was a guide, blazing a path through the tangled morals and the unexplored wilderness of the world's sins; and this was one of the waymarks he made. As a hunter in a forest, when threading his way through the bewildering pines on a clouded day toward a distant point, lifts his axe, and strikes a piece of bark as large as his hat from the side of a giant tree, saying to himself, "There, nobody will ever fail to see that;" so Paul left this word, as he was opening up the path of Christian morals, like a broad, unmistakable sign, as a guide for those who should come after him.

My friends, have we all seen this sign on the tree? Have we passed by Paul's landmark? Have we been following along his road? Have we "*abhorred*" sin? Have we felt this strong, Pauline, gospel detestation of evil? Have we shrunk back from it, as a woman shrinks, with the suddenness of uncontrollable fear, from an adder coiled in her path? Have we failed in this respect? If so, how great a failure is it? and what shall we do?

In the first place, I remark that the failure to feel this abhorrence of evil is, by as much as it is experienced, a proof that our spiritual and moral condition

is not good. When flesh is stricken with the numbness of paralysis, it does not feel the puncture of a pin; and the reason is, because the nerves which telegraph the pain to the great nervous centre — the brain — are inoperant. The connection between the member and the seat of the sensations is lost. The wires are cut, and communication is destroyed. The fact that the patient does not feel the surgeon's test proves this. The state or condition demonstrates the cause. So it is between the soul and Christ, who is to each of us, as his followers, what the brain sensationally is to the body. To be connected to Christ is to feel as he feels; to have his temper and disposition. We are then truly members of his body. Now, we know how he felt toward sin, — toward its enticements and seductions. You recall his reply to the Tempter when tempting him. You know how intense is the moral antagonism of the two. And, when Paul selects the word "abhor" as descriptive of that feeling that a follower of Christ should have toward evil, we know that he did not go beyond the truth. Knowing as he did what Christ's feelings were, he could not have chosen a milder or a less intense word.

Now, as I have said, one of the tests that Christ is or is not with a soul is found in the presence or absence of this abhorrence of evil in the soul; and the question comes home to every follower of the Saviour present, "Have I this abhorrence?" I make no application of this feeling, friends; I leave that for each of you to do for yourself: I inquire only

as to its presence in your heart. Among other evidences, have you this evidence that you are Christ's? Do you look upon any evil, and not feel its enormity? Do you tolerate any sin in yourself? Is the presence of evil in this city a daily worry and anxiety to your soul? Can you buy and sell in company with trickery and deceit? Do you carry your abhorrence of sin into politics, and vote as you pray? What *is* your status, judged by this text?

I think that we shall grow, in time, to consider such questions as these as the pivotal ones in Christian experience. For centuries, the foremost interrogation of Christendom has been, "What do you believe? How do you interpret this? Do you assent to that?" The perceptive powers have held sway, and dominated over the emotive faculties. But, my friends, the Church will see its error in time. God will at last touch our blurred eyes; and brethren will no longer smite each other, not knowing whom they hit. We grant the value of intellect. We have spoken as strong words as any one in support of maintaining a creed. No one but an ignorant or wicked person can possibly misunderstand our position. But, granting the full importance of the perceptive faculties in theology, — and they have high uses, — still these are not supreme. Faith was never declared to be "the fulfilling of the law." Statements and definitions of belief are not of primary importance. The letter is beneath the spirit. It is the emotive, and not the perceptive power, that the Holy Ghost regenerates; and the result aimed at is not improvement

in man's philosophy, so much as improvement in his practice. I would sooner have you all so changed in heart and soul from what you were when in the state of nature, as to "abhor" evil, than to see you all qualified to fill chairs of systematic theology in our theological seminaries. It is not increase of theological knowledge that the earth needs: it is the more universal dissemination of Christian feeling. I set you so frequently face to face with this great truth, because it is the solar truth of the Christian scheme, and the pillar of guiding flame, commanded of God to precede and direct the march of the ages. It is not Christ in your heads, but Christ enthroned in your hearts, that I would fain advance. In spite of the prayer and command of the Master, that his disciples might be one as he and the Father are one; notwithstanding that this immortal aspiration has been before their eyes, and sounded in their ears, at almost every recurring sacrament; notwithstanding the striving of the Spirit for these twenty centuries, that the same mind might be in her membership that is in Christ Jesus, — notwithstanding all this, I say, the deplorable assertion is true, that the history of the Church has been the history of division and differences. The ages back of us resound with the cry of the zealot and the bigot: they are filled with the voice of contention and anathema. The spring opened by the love of God on Calvary had scarcely become a stream before its pure waters were defiled by the trampling of contestants; and, alas! they remain turbid to this day.

Is there a man in this audience who longs to continue this state of things? What Christian heart here pants to prolong the strife of words, the battle of hostile intellects, the spirit of contention and bitterness? Let the graves have their victory, I say, and cover forever beneath their grasses the warriors and the war. Palsied forever be the hand that would scatter the teeth of dragons! Silenced be the tongue that would launch forth a battle-cry among brethren! If we are of the family of God, then let peace be and abide, like an angel of light, in the circle of our banded love.

Is there a religion of the heart, friends? and, if so, do you feel it? Is there a piety of the soul which says to the head, "Thou art my servant, and not my master"? Is there a union of mind with mind such as cements in sweet accord the intelligences of heaven? Is there a sea somewhere, unvexed by storms, in which all ships may sail; over which no sun shines, nor moon, nor stars, and yet which is illumined from centre unto its golden marge by the light which cometh forth from the throne of God, and from Him, yea, from that inconceivable splendor, called in Scripture "the Light of the world"? If so, my people, I charge you to sail that sea. Unite your *hearts*. Hate with one accord the things hateful to God. Love the things that are lovely and above reproach. The fathers trusted themselves to currents of their own starting; and they wrecked their own peace and the peace of the Church. The elder Beecher was wont to grieve, and express grave doubts,

whether Bishop Heber was of those born of God. How much wiser he is to-day! How much those old preachers have learned of the love of God since when they fought each other, and moaned and grieved over each other's lapses, as they conceived, from the true faith! Taylor and Tyler no longer contend. Beecher and Nettleton are no longer separated. Woods has no longer need to labor to harmonize differences between brethren. Even Calvin and Channing have found a common platform at last, and stand, hand clasped in hand, happy in a common love, before the throne of an infinite and a like-experienced mercy.

These personal allusions naturally lead us to the contemplation of the second division of the subject. The command of the text is, "Abhor *that* which is evil." It does not enjoin, "Abhor *him* who is evil," but *that*; not the evil person, but the evil temper or tendency, — the evil *in* the person. Here, you see, is a wide distinction, suggested by the employment of a single word. Had it been "Abhor him," it would have enjoined a religion of hate, and not a religion of love. It is sin God hates, not the sinner. It is the evil in you, — the bad temper, the rebellious will, the unrepented wickedness, — and not yourself, my hearer, that your Creator and Judge condemns. A loving father does not cease to love a disobedient child. Condemnation and punishment do not denote the cessation of affection. It is true that you can only reach the crime through the criminal. You must put the thief, if you would check the thieving propen-

sity, into jail. But this organic necessity — this inseparability, before the law, of agent and act — does not militate against the truth of the statement, that the object of the abhorrence is not the doer, but the deed. For, albeit that the world was full of sin, — yea, full to the very brim of uncleanness, — still it is recorded that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This makes the statement incontrovertible.

What then, in the light of Scripture, is our duty? Plainly this, — *obey*. Nor is obedience at all complicated or difficult, granted a willing disposition. It is impurity in the atmosphere, and not the air itself, against which the senses revolt. The air is pure, and to be breathed freely. It is the contaminated and contaminating current which has intruded itself into the healthful element from which men shrink and flee. Yet this love for wicked men is the result and triumph of grace, and not of nature. By nature, man is not benevolent; and the wars, the cruelty and barbarism, of ages, witness to the truth of the statement. If Christianity did not absolutely give birth to humanity, it has incontestably developed it. But the impulse of humanity in its highest form is not the impulse of love. It is not in any sense the seed from which sprang the consummate flower of modern civilization. The two emotions are as distinct as two trees of different species. The Christian religion, as you see, is not an improvement of the old religions; not the refinement and spiritualization of the old phi-

losophies: it is a new religion, like unto none other that the world ever saw. Many of its precepts and maxims, it is true, are similar to those that had been enunciated long before Christ came; but the spirit which clothed the dry bones with flesh, which animated the lifeless forms of truth, breathing vitality and energy into every nerveless joint and withered vein, was born, and born alone, on Calvary. Christianity is not the last and fairest of a long succession of children: it is the first-born and only-begotten of God. This is the simple historical truth; and may none of you, through vain philosophy, be led away and deceived! Against sin, God is as a thunder-gust when it rideth forth in blackness, with the whirlwind for its chariot, and the terrible lightnings for the expression of its power. Toward the sinner he is like the light of the morning, which waketh a slumbering world to life; or as the rain which comes with refreshment to the earth, and washeth the stains from the soiled faces of the flowers. Oh for an exhibition of God in the thunder, that the sin and iniquity wrought into systems might be beaten down! Oh for the dawn of the light, that the sleeping virtues of our souls may be aroused! If you would imitate Jehovah, ye followers of him, take sin by the throat, and the sinner by the hand.

But this abhorrence of evil which we are commanded to feel is not a natural growth: it is the result of education. Let me explain. By nature, no one hates sin. There is no natural repulsion from it in the human heart. I am not reasoning theologi-

cally now; I am not going over, like a parrot, the orthodox belief: I am drawing my conclusions from observation and experience. What is the conclusion of observation? It is this, — that men err easily. It does not require a great effort for man to do evil. Thieves and burglars and murderers are not martyrs. There is in the human race, and has been during all the years of which history tells us, a great law of evil gravitation. By the weight of inward inclinations, by the action of downward-tending affinities, men degrade. The trouble has been, — and, as you all know, it requires great effort, — the trouble has been, I say, to project men upward. Of all the streams started, out of whatever soil springing, under whatever sky, whether their sources were in valleys or on mountains, wherever located, under whatever conditions of individual, tribal, or national life, still, whether rippling, or flowing with deep channels and full banks, the currents of all have set one way: they have all flowed toward, and emptied themselves into, the great, deep, unfathomable gulf of human corruption. The sea that the ships of hell sail knows no ebb, suffers no drought. It has been so from the beginning: it is equally so to-day. As a race, man is not by nature amiable; he is not peaceable; he is not humane. If not this, who is here who dares reject this saying, — “He is not holy”? No one can deny this testimony of observation. Man’s status by nature is proved beyond cavil, beyond peradventure. It is shown by the customs of every heathen tribe, by the vices of every civilized nation. You read it in every

law written in your statute-books, in every jail you are taxed to build, in every precaution you take in business, in every lock and bolt on the doors of your dwellings. When orthodox preachers declare that man by nature is sinful, they do not advertise a notion peculiar to their own sect; they do not say so merely because Paul and Calvin and Edwards said it: they say it because it is a *fact*, the evidence and sure proof of which is fresh, constantly corroborated, and patent to all. It is the only explanation which fully accounts for the phenomenon of evil in the world.

If impelled by a stubborn determination not to yield this point until the evidence partakes of the force and characteristics of an avalanche, a presence and majesty that you cannot resist,—if this is your spirit, and you call for proof, I retort on you, *Look within*. Now, my hearer, I know nothing of your life; but you know I would not draw aside the curtain behind which seven-tenths of your life lie hidden, three-tenths only being visible. Let it hang there undisturbed, with untouched cord and woven folds. I would not lift the fringe with my finger. A day will come in which it shall be drawn aside; yea, an hour and a moment will come, when a swift, an invisible, an irresistible hand, casting no shadow as it falls, shall grasp it, and tear it down, and fling it aside; and all the secrets, the subterfuges, the falsities, the sins, of your life, shall stand exposed. But that hand is another's, not mine; and that day is somewhere ahead, not yet. And now I ask you only to go behind that

curtain yourself, and standing there alone amid the errors, the lapses, the struggles, of your life, — the screen between you and me, — tell me if it has been easy to be virtuous. Has honesty cost no effort? Has purity been a thing you could not lose? Has temptation met with no response? Have you found no evil within answering to evil without? Ah me! the knife is keen and long and searching; and it draws blood. “Away with it, away with it!” you say. “It is cruel; and it hurts. Put it up. I yield.” And so we agree, do we, friend, that man by nature does not “abhor evil,” and abhorrence must come, not through nature, but through GRACE.

Hail to that precious word! Like a well in a desert, thousands shall come to it, and drink. By *grace*, by the sweet favor of God, is man folded within the embrace of his love. By the touch of its infinite power, the blinded eyes are made to see, the deaf ears to hear, the insensible heart to feel, the sinfulness of sin. Not alone by salvation is the goodness of God manifested, but more yet, as I often think, in making incapacity capable, insensibility sensitive, and so renewing the nature that the affinities and antagonisms of it become but a reflection of his own. It is not the heaven he is to give me, but the heaven already mine, for which I thank him. Like a slave just emancipated, fresh from chains, with the marks of the whip unhealed on his back, with his ankles and wrists swollen from the torture of the shackles, I know not what wealth, what refinement, what enlargement of capacity, what joys, are ahead: I

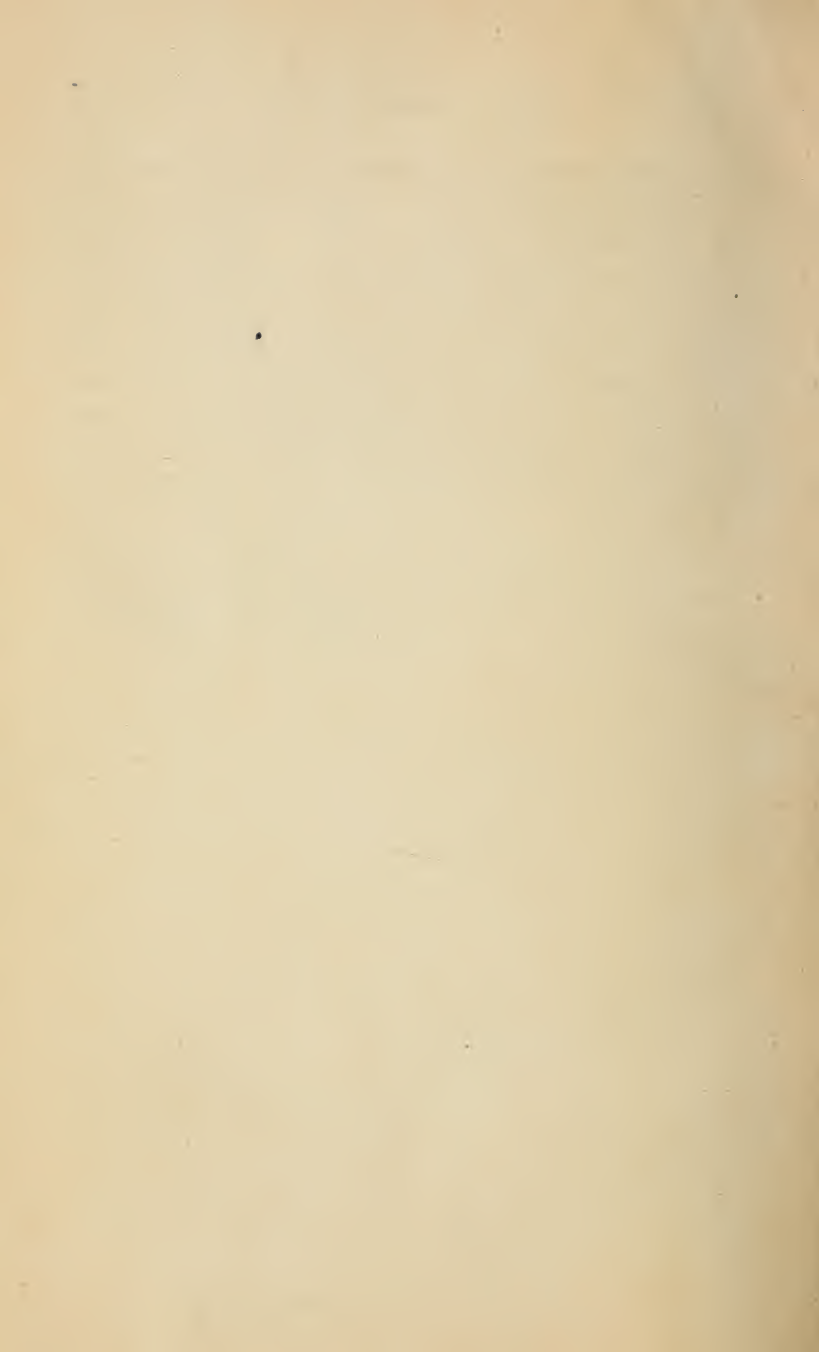
only know that I am *free*. I am no longer under dominion to my old taskmaster; I am no longer bound: I am emancipated; I am redeemed; I am a free man in Christ Jesus. This is all I care to know. Let the future alone. My cup runneth over as it is. Say nothing of what I am to have and to be. This is luxury, — to feel that I have my freedom; to feel that I am free. No more as a beggar, but as one rescued from poverty, and who goeth to the door of his benefactor to give thanks daily, go I to God in prayer, — no more to ask as one who has not; for in Christ he has given me all. “How dull and stupid I have been!” I say often to myself. “I have made it a duty to feel poor, when God has made it a duty for me to feel rich. Like a sluggish or over-timid bird, I have clung to the miserable and outgrown nest when the wings ached for exercise, the winds solicited my weight, the Spirit was pushing me, and the illimitable spaces, calling from all their crystal depths, said, ‘Come up into us, and enjoy your freedom, and grow your power.’” And I have said to myself, hesitating, as one suddenly made rich hesitates to believe his good fortune, “Yes; it must be so: the apostle was right when he said, ‘Rejoice evermore; and again I say, Rejoice.’”

This, then, is the source of that abhorrence of sin which the Scripture makes it a duty for us all to feel. It is the result of the new birth; it is the result and proof of holiness. It should exist, it should be felt in full measure, by us all.

And now, friends, what more need I say? You

know, each and all of you, how much of sin dwells in you. I think I have shown you how it works, and to what result it leads. When you find your thoughts on the morrow running in an evil way, your imagination lending its powers to sin, if you will recall what I have said, it may, perchance, serve to help you, and prove a kind of check. Were I to exhort, I should say to every one of you here, Get sin by the throat as you would a robber and a murderer. Kill, first of all, that sin which is killing you fastest, — that besetting, that productive sin, which, true to the prolific instinct of evil, begets a thousand other sins. If it is your right hand which offends you; if it is your eye even, whatever precious faculty it is, cut it off, pluck it out, and cast it from you; maim yourself touching any earthly use or enjoyment, if thereby you can enter into the enlarged and ever-enlarging life of the soul. That life will be sublime. Then will our highest faculties find their highest use; and out of those already ours, as flowers and trees come out of seeds, new powers will spring. No exercise shall tire, no grossness weigh us down. We shall float upon that atmosphere of life, and rest, as I have seen falcons in the warm summer-time hang over meadows, lying on the air motionless, a bunch of feathers smitten by the sun, a winged radiance; for there the corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and the mortal shall have put on immortality. Live then, I do beseech you, friends, with a bias toward the stars, so that, whenever the summons comes, whether at the second or the third

watch of the night, it shall find you plumed and ready for your upward flight. Then shall you mount at death as birds on some summer morning sail up, cleaving the dark mist to find the sunshine overhead; and when they find it, the warm rays of orange and the clear fields of blue, the cool ether and the far-reaching sky, hovering on joyous wing, their perch on earth forgot, they pour their gladness forth in song. Hail to that mode of life which makes our death the hour of sunrise, — the hour of elevation and of song! And, O thou Purifier of the gross! purge out our heaviness, impart to us thy buoyancy, that, with a song unsung till then, we may at death soar upward, and forever dwell with thee.



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